

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**‘AT YOUR CONVENIENCE’
Politeness Strategies in Quotation Letters Written by Non-
Native and Native Speakers of English**

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by

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'AT YOUR CONVENIENCE'

Politeness strategies in quotation letters written by non-native and native speakers of English

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Liike-elämässä viestintä, esimerkiksi liikekirjeiden kirjoittaminen, tapahtuu yhä enemmän vieraalla kielellä. Kohteliaan viestin muotoileminen voi aiheuttaa vaikeuksia jollei kirjoittajan kielitaito ole riittävä. Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan suomalaisten vieraan kielen puhujien kohteliaisuusstrategioiden käyttöä englanninkielisissä liikekirjeissä ja selvittää, eroavatko ne natiivipuhujien käyttämistä strategioista. Materiaali koostuu suomalaisen teollisuusyrityksen suomalaisten ja amerikkalaisten työntekijöiden englanniksi kirjoittamista autenttisista liikekirjeistä. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan, millaisia kohteliaisuusstrategioita kirjeissä käytetään sekä verrataan natiivipuhujien ja suomalaisten käyttämiä strategioita toisiinsa. Tutkielma on pääosin kuvaileva.

Analyysin perustana on Brownin ja Levinsonin (1978) kohteliaisuussteoria ja heidän käyttämänsä strategialuokitukset (*bald on*, negatiivinen ja positiivinen kohteliaisuus, ja *off record*). Lisäksi analyysissä tarkastellaan muita yleisiä kohteliaan kielenkäytön piirteitä ja tyyliseikkoja. Kirjeistä löytyneet strategiat ja kohteliaisuuskäytännöt on jaoteltu luokkiin, jonka jälkeen niiden määrät on laskettu ja pohdittu syitä niiden käyttöön. Lopuksi kahden ryhmän tuloksia on vertailtu.

Tulokset osoittavat että natiivipuhujien ja suomalaisten väliset erot kohteliaisuusstrategioiden käytössä ovat tässä aineistossa hyvin pieniä. Tulos voi johtua monesta eri seikasta, joista tärkeimpänä on tietysti suomalaisten hyvä kielitaito. Lisäksi liikekirjeissä käytetyt kohteliaisuusstrategiat toistuvat monesti samanlaisina, ja ne on siten helppo opetella. Yhtenä syynä käytettyjen strategioiden samankaltaisuuteen voi olla myös yrityksen josaain määrin käyttämät mallipohjat liikekirjeille, joihin lisätään vain kyseessäolevaan kauppaan liittyviä yksilöityjä tietoja.

Asiasanat: business. communication. quotation letters. politeness strategies. non-native writers.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Business communication is one specific area within the vast field of communication. It can be further divided into spoken and written communication. Written and oral skills are two of the most important skills for a successful manager (e.g. Hildebrandt et al. 1982). Written business communication consists of reports, memos, faxes, letters and e-mail messages. Of these e-mail is nowadays more and more important in business correspondence; it is fast and easy to use. In fact, e-mail as means of business communication seems to have taken the place of letters and faxes. However, in many companies letters are still used and some people actually prefer letters to e-mail. Besides, the use of e-mail has technical limitations; a computer is needed for sending and receiving e-mail messages. Computers are necessary for e-mail and the distribution of computers depends on the business field. For example, in information technology companies all employees usually have their own personal computer, whereas in a factory there may be one computer for all the workers and probably the computer is not used daily. In addition, computers are not so commonly used all over the world and therefore the “old-fashioned” letters are still important when doing business.

Comparison of e-mail messages and letters show that both have several similar features, even though e-mail messages are regarded as more informal than letters. The level of informality naturally depends on the relationships, on how well the participants know each other, i.e. the distance between them. Generally it is considered that a certain level of formality or distance is kept in business relationships (see e.g. Pilegaard 1997:226). However, during the business relationship some changes on the level of distance can take place (Pilegaard 1997, Charles 1996). Formality and distance are aspects of politeness, and social distance is one of the factors influencing how threatening a certain act is in Brown and Levinson’s (1978) politeness

theory. Social distance can be determined through the level of acquaintance, (see e.g. Yli-Jokipii 1996).

Several textbooks have been published on professional communication which give advice on how to write better business reports, memos, letters, faxes and e-mails. Business communication and commercial correspondence is taught in schools and it is wise for companies to invest in improving their communication, particularly with their interest groups. However, it is easier to teach or provide recommendations about the structure of good business letter than about the style. One important aspect of style is linguistic politeness, in other words the courtesy or deference of letters. Many textbooks of commercial correspondence seem to ignore politeness, or, at most only give advice on how to begin and end the letter in a polite way. For example, *A handbook of commercial correspondence* (1993, Ashley, pp. 19-20) discusses style and language of commercial correspondence briefly and suggests that commercial correspondence often suffers from an old-fashioned, even pompous style of English which complicates the message (ibid., p. 19). Further, it includes a short chapter called 'Courtesy' where it is argued (Ashley 1993:19) that: "Your style should not, however, be so simple that it becomes discourteous." According to Ashley (1993:20), the stylistic devices which make letters more polite are complex sentences joined by conjunctions rather than short sentences, passive rather than active, and full forms rather than abbreviated forms. Later in summarising his points Ashley argues that a simple but polite style of language should be used in letters (1993:22). In short, this textbook does not seem to be very helpful in shaping linguistically polite letters.

Linguistic politeness is an important factor which every careful business writer must take into consideration. What does the linguistic politeness then consist of? As Ashley suggests at least complex sentences and passives seem to be part of it. In addition, politeness can be seen as smooth communication (e.g. Ide 1988, Holtgraves and Yang 1990) and sometimes it

may be easier to point out aspects of rudeness. Many studies have been published on the topic of linguistic politeness (e.g. Goffman 1967; Lakoff 1973; Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987; Leech 1983). These mainly concentrate on the spoken language although some studies have been made on the written language, and also on politeness in business writing (e.g. Yli-Jokipii 1991, 1994, 1996; Maier 1992, Pilegaard 1997). Brown and Levinson's (1978) framework on politeness strategies is perhaps the most ambitious attempt to define politeness and their framework's universal aspects make it even more interesting. Their theory will be introduced in chapter 2 in detail.

An important part of today's business writing, where politeness is essential, is interaction with people from different countries and cultures. International business is more and more global today, not least because of modern technology, such as e-mail. Different cultures have different expectations of politeness and formality when it comes to business correspondence. These cultural differences cause the main problems in international communication. Terpstra (1978, as quoted in Kilpatrick 1984) suggests that each language should be viewed as a cultural mirror because the language reflects the content and nature of the culture it represents. He implies that to learn a language well, one must actually learn the culture. This can be seen in the perception of politeness, too, because what is regarded polite in one culture is not necessarily so in another culture. Maier (1992) compared business letters written by a group of native speakers of English to those written by a group of non-native speakers and the results of her study indicate "...striking differences in the politeness strategies used by each group." (Maier 1992:189) Also the conventions differ according to situations. Carrell and Konneker (1981) have shown that non-native speakers show an oversensitivity in the area of politeness in English. Non-native speakers can have problems in performing politeness with the limited means of their learner language. It is hard for a non-native speakers or writers to know all the connotations and hidden meanings that lie beneath

the surface. For this reason, some companies use native speakers or linguists and ask them to check the language of their documentation but this is not always possible.

Writing effectively and politely is thus demanding for non-native speakers who need to communicate with their second language. Often a native speaker is prepared to make allowances for the foreigner's sometimes faulty or unclear language. However, as Ladau-Harjulin (1998:257) states, business is business and in the competitive selling situation the same rules apply for all sellers. This is the case when there are buyer's markets; the buyer makes the decision and has the power in the relationship. Therefore it is essential for non-native speakers to use their language as well and appropriately as possible; for no company can afford to lose a deal because of inappropriate language use. A business relationship is a delicate situation where every possible effort is worthwhile and where even the tiniest things must be taken into consideration in order to sell. A buyer can be taken off because of a misunderstanding caused by connotations, not to mention impoliteness. Nowadays companies do not compete so much with prices but with good relationships, service and images. In short, today language plays an essential part in business relationships.

Nowadays English is regarded as a lingua franca in business (e.g. Kilpatrick 1984, Haarmann 1991, Louhiala-Salminen 1996, Young Park et al. 1998). Nevertheless, the amount of research on the so called business English is small (Louhiala-Salminen 1996). More research is needed in order to come to know business English better and help the non-native speakers to improve their language skills. In addition, research is important because there are now more non-native speakers of English than native speakers (Bloch and Starks 1999:81). In Bloch's and Starks' view, English is: "...an international language used by a variety of speakers for a variety of functions in a variety of ways." (Bloch and Starks 1999:81) Further, English is used widely in businesses in countries where it is not an official language, for instance in

Finland. Although English is not the native language of employees it is used in many companies in internal communication or as an 'official language', meaning that all reports, memos, etc., must be in English. One of the reasons for this is that the company can have foreign employees and therefore English is a practical common language for everyone. Further, and perhaps more importantly, English is also used because of internationalisation. If a company wants to succeed abroad, it is quite practical for them to have most of their written communication and web pages in English. This is particularly the case in smaller countries, such as Finland. Finnish people do not have a choice; they have to learn some other language if they want to 'go abroad', and usually this language is English.

The aim of this study is to analyse business letters, more precisely quotation letters, written by the sales personnel of a Finnish industrial company. The study will concentrate on politeness strategies used in the letters. The material will consist of ten letters written in English by non-native (Finnish) speakers and ten letters written in English by native speakers. I will compare the politeness strategies used in the letters and try to indentify possible differences and similarities. The field of the study will be pragmatics, and more particularly Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson's theory predicts cross-cultural parallels in the politeness phenomena which makes it even more applicable in the present data. Hopefully this study will give useful hints and insights for the non-native writers in writing polite business letters in English. However, the purpose of this study is not to focus on linguistic proficiency; for instance on grammatical inaccuracy.

In the next chapter I will present some general notions on politeness and then Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, in particular. Chapter 3 will discuss the previous research done on politeness in business letters. In chapter 4, I will introduce the present study, its research questions, research material and analytic method. After that I will move on to presenting the

results of my study in chapter 5, first negative politeness strategies found in letters, then positive politeness strategies and finally bald-on record strategies. The comparison of results will be discussed in chapter 6. Chapter 7 will present the summary of the main findings and compare them to the previous research. The analysed letters are included in appendices.

Figure 1. Polite behaviour and the scale of social meanings by Blum-Kulka.

Blum-Kulka (1992:276) continues that the central zone is that of 'polite' behaviour which includes the range of cultural expectations for what constitutes appropriate social behaviour relative to changing social situations. Since such expectations are usually tacit, polite behaviour is largely taken for granted, at most noticeable as showing an actor's 'tactfulness', she points out (1992:276). Deviations from the cultural norms will draw attention, and it is easier for people who are unfamiliar with these norms to deviate from them. Thus, the non-fulfilment of a given politeness rule, such as using a 'wrong' term of address, carries with it two potential social risks. The first risk is that of being judged as lacking social manners, or more extremely, of being attributed negative personality traits (such as 'non-considerate' or 'tactless' person). The second risk is derived from the power of politeness to invite conversational implicatures (Blum-Kulka 1992:276). Conversational implicature, as initially defined by Grice (1975), means an inference, an additional message, that the hearer is able to work out from what is said by appealing to the rules governing successful conversational interaction.

In summing up the power of his model of the cooperative principle plus the four sub-maxims, Grice (1975:47 as quoted in Blum-Kulka 1992:276) notes that 'there are, of course, all sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social or moral in character), such as 'Be polite', that are also normally observed by participants in talk exchanges, and these may also generate non-conventional implicatures'. Conversational implicature is one type of non-conventional implicature. According to Blum-Kulka (1992:276), deviance from 'normal' politeness, especially by excess, might invite such implicatures. Minimally, participants in an exchange will just notice if undue effort is being invested in 'being polite'; maximally, they will attribute to the speaker a hidden agenda of some sort. For example, the wife might interpret her husband's extremely polite behaviour to her mother as a

sure indicator of his dislike for his mother-in-law. ‘Unusual’ politeness might be suspected as an attempt at manipulation. One type of attribution, though, seems common to deviance from cultural norms of politeness both by diminished and excessive use: if the person in question is clearly an outsider to the culture, s/he might be excused as ‘foreign’, the label cancelling all other attributions. Blum-Kulka (1992:276-277) argues that:

But of course, as is known from the rich literature on ethnic and cross-cultural miscommunication (e.g. Gumperz 1982; Knapp et al. 1987), in actual discourse the excuse for ‘foreigners’ is barely granted even to tourists, while in practice perceptions of the behaviour of the foreigner as deviant most often lead to cultural stereotyping. (Blum-Kulka 1992:276-277)

Well-known examples of these cultural stereotypes are the image of British as formal, conservative people, and of Finns as silent. However, as was mentioned above, allowances for foreigners are not made in business situations.

Four main ways of viewing politeness can be seen in the literature, the ‘social-norm’, the ‘conversational-maxim’, the ‘face-saving’ and the ‘conversational-contract’ view (Fraser 1990:219-236). The face-saving view of politeness derives from Brown and Levinson (1978) and it could be said to have been most influential one in providing a paradigm for linguistic politeness which goes beyond a mere extension of the Gricean maxims (Fraser 1990:228). Interest in the socio-cultural phenomenon of politeness and the ways in which it is realised in language usage has grown since Brown and Levinson’s article in 1978 (Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992:1). Next I will present Brown and Levinson's politeness theory.

2.2 Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory

Central to Brown and Levinson’s theory is the concept of face, as proposed by Goffman (1967) who defined face as:

“...the positive social value of a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular

contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes - albeit an image that others might share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself." (Goffman 1967:5)

Brown and Levinson define (1978:66) face as something that is emotionally invested and the face can be lost, maintained or enhanced and it must be constantly attended to in interaction. Similarly, in Thomas' view (1995:169), 'face' is best understood within politeness theory as every individual's feeling of self-worth or self-image. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:66), face has two aspects: positive and negative. A positive face means the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' claimed by interactants which is "...crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of..." (Brown and Levinson 1978:66). In other words, positive face is reflected in interactant's desire to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by other people. A negative face means "...the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition." (Brown and Levinson 1978:66) Negative face is reflected in the desire not to be impeded or put upon. Cooperation is essentially connected to face in Brown and Levinson's theory. They argue (1978:65, 66) that it is everyone's best interest of two persons to maintain each other's face and people cooperate and assume each other's cooperation in doing so. Such cooperation is based on the mutual vulnerability of face (Brown and Levinson 1978:66).

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:65), certain acts can damage or threaten another person's face and these acts are referred to as face-threatening acts (FTAs). An FTA has the potential to damage the hearer's positive or negative face or the act may damage the speaker's own positive or negative face (Brown and Levinson 1978:65). In order to reduce the possibility of damage to the hearer's or to the speaker's face, s/he may adopt certain strategies; these strategies Brown and Levinson call politeness strategies (1978:65). Politeness strategies can be divided into four main strategies: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-

record strategies. The speaker can choose from these strategies if she wants to perform the FTA or she can choose not to perform the FTA. As can be seen also from the names of the strategies, negative politeness strategies are oriented towards satisfying hearer's negative face and positive politeness strategies are oriented towards the positive face of hearer (Brown and Levinson 1978:75). The size of the threat varies and so does the redressive action of strategies, thus the speaker can choose a right kind of strategy for a particular FTA (Brown and Levinson 1978:65). If the act is very threatening, speaker generally chooses very redressive strategy. Figure 2 illustrates the redressiveness of actions; the higher the number the more redressive strategy (Brown and Levinson 1978:65). The most redressive strategy is not to do the FTA and the least redressive is to do the FTA baldly.

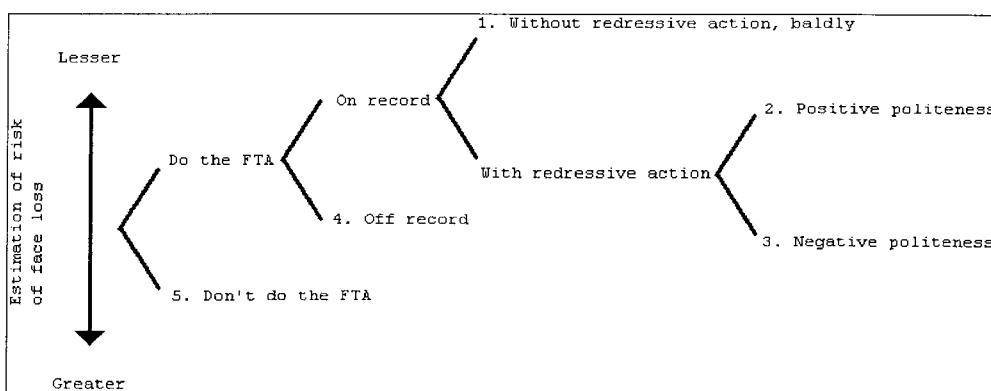


Figure 2. Circumstances determining choice of strategy by Brown and Levinson.

Brown and Levinson argue (1978:79) that the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA involves three factors in many cultures. The factors are: the social distance (D) of speaker and hearer, the relative power (P) of speaker and hearer and the absolute ranking (R) of impositions in the particular culture (Brown and Levinson 1978:79). Brown and Levinson present a formula for calculating the weightiness of an FTA (1978:81) which is the following: $W_x = D(S, H) + P(S, H) + R_x$. If the weightiness (W) is big, FTA is serious (or big) then the needed strategy should be more redressive. If the weightiness is small, FTA is less serious and therefore the needed strategy can be less redressive.

Social distance means the level of acquaintance between the interactants, how well they know each other. Different terms of address can display the social distance, like in letters the formal greeting 'Dear Sir or Madam' and informal 'Dear John'. For example, if the social distance (D) between speaker and hearer is great, the speaker might say: "Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?" If the social distance between speaker and hearer is small, the speaker might say: "Got the time, mate?" Relative power means status or rank of the speakers, for instance, when considered relative power between manager and her assistant the manager's social status is higher, therefore she has more power. There are various factors which influence the power relationship, position at the workplace, age, sex or wealth, to name a few. Naturally, the one with the greater power can use a less polite strategy whereas a less powerful person should use more redressive strategies. Likewise, if the ranking of imposition is big, the speaker is expected to use very formal and polite language. The ranking of imposition is dependant on how much the act interferes with the rules and norms of the particular situation and culture.

As to business writing, according to White (1997. <<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AcaDepts/cl/slals/maxims.htm>>), the ranking of impositions in business correspondence varies according to whether the parties concerned have specific rights or obligations to perform the act, whether they have specific reasons for not performing them or whether the people concerned are known to enjoy being imposed upon in some way. White continues that the providers of goods and services have obligations to provide a certain level of service, such as reliable delivery within a deadline. On the other hand, the customer has certain rights and expectations with regard to the meeting of deadlines and quality criteria and the helpfulness of staff. He concludes that the ranking of imposition, and of rights and obligations, varies from individual to individual, and from one context to another, although some general trends can be observed (White 1997. <<http://www.rdg.ac.uk>

/AcaDepts/cl/slals/maxims.htm>). However, the final value of weightiness of FTA is the sum of all three factors.

Next each of the four main strategies of Brown and Levinson's theory will be presented separately, first bald-on record, then off-record, next negative politeness and, finally, positive politeness.

2.2.1 Bald-on-record strategy

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:74), bald-on-record strategy is a direct way of saying things, without any minimisation to the imposition, in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way, for example: "Do X!". Brown and Levinson (1978:100) claim that the prime reason for bald-on-record usage may be stated simply: in general, whenever the speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than s/he wants to satisfy hearer's face, even to any degree, s/he will choose the bald-on-record strategy.

There are different kinds of bald-on-record usage in different circumstances, because the speaker can have different motives for her/his want to do the FTA with maximum efficiency (Brown and Levinson 1978:100). The motives fall into two classes: 1) where the face threat is not minimised, where face is ignored or is irrelevant and 2) where in doing the FTA baldly on record, the speaker minimises face threats by implication (Brown and Levinson 1978:100).

Brown and Levinson (ibid., 1978:100) give examples of bald-on-record strategy and say that direct imperatives are clear examples of bald-on-record usage. Imperatives are often softened with hedges or conventional politeness markers, e.g.: *'Please send us the offer.'* Verb 'do' is used with imperatives, like in *'Do call us!'* (Brown and Levinson 1978:106). What Brown and Levinson call bald-on-record strategies might involve simply following the Gricean maxims, whereas politeness strategies would involve violating the maxims in specific way (Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992:7).

2.2.2 Off-record strategy

Brown and Levinson (1978:216) define off-record strategy as a communicative act which is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute one clear communicative intention to the act. In this case the actor leaves her/himself an 'out' by providing her/himself with a number of defensible interpretations, s/he cannot be held to have committed himself to just one particular interpretation of her/his act (Brown and Levinson 1978:216). In other words, Brown and Levinson claim (1978:216), the actor leaves it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret the act.

Brown and Levinson (1978:216) continue that such off record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language. One says something that is either more general (contains less information in the sense that it rules out fewer possible states of affairs) or actually different from what one means (intends to be understood), according to Brown and Levinson (1978:216). They continue (1978:216) that in both cases, the hearer must make some inference to recover what was in fact intended. For example, if somebody says: "*It is hot in here!*", the hidden meaning of the utterance can be a request to open the window.

Brown and Levinson (1978:218) list inviting conversational implicatures as one main strategy of off-recordness and its subcategories are: giving hints, giving association clues, presupposing, understating, overstating, using tautologies, using contradictions, being ironic, using metaphors and using rhetorical questions. The other main strategy of going off record is being vague or ambiguous and its subcategories are being ambiguous, being vague, over-generalising, displacing hearer and being incomplete (Brown and Levinson 1978:230-232).

2.2.3 Negative politeness

When Brown and Levinson define negative politeness, they say that it is (1978:134-135) a redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative

face: addressee's want to have addressee's freedom of action unhindered and addressee's attention unimpeded. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:134), negative politeness is the heart of respectful behaviour, just as positive politeness is the kernel of 'familiar' and 'joking' behaviour. Negative politeness corresponds to the rituals of avoidance. Where positive politeness is free-ranging, negative politeness is specific and focused; it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects, Brown and Levinson (1978:134) argue. It can be said that negative politeness is the kind of politeness used between acquaintances whereas positive politeness is used between closer friends.

Brown and Levinson claim (1978:135) that when thinking of politeness in Western cultures, it is negative-politeness behaviour that first comes to mind. In addition, in our culture, negative politeness is the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA redress; it fills the etiquette books although positive politeness gets some attention. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:135), the linguistic realizations of negative politeness - conventional indirectness, hedges on illocutionary force, polite pessimism (about the success of requests, etc.), the emphasis on hearer's (or recipient's) relative power - are very familiar and need no introduction.

In addition, Brown and Levinson say (1978:135) that the negative politeness outputs are all forms useful in general for social 'distancing' (just as positive-politeness realizations are forms for minimizing social distance): they are therefore likely to be used whenever a speaker or sender wants to put a social brake on to the course of interaction. Brown and Levinson (1978:135-216) see five main categories as the linguistic realizations of negative politeness; communicating sender's want not to impinge the receiver, not coercing receiver, not presuming/assuming, being (conventionally indirect) and redressing other receiver's wants.

2.2.4 Positive politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:106) positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's (or receiver's) positive face, her/his perennial desire that her/his wants - or the actions, acquisitions, values resulting from them - should be thought of as desirable. Brown and Levinson describe (1978:106) that the redress consists in partially satisfying that desire that one's own wants - or some of them - are in some respects similar to the addressee's (receiver's) wants. Brown and Levinson (1978:106) continue that unlike negative politeness, positive politeness is not necessarily redressive of the particular face want infringed by the FTA. In other words; whereas in negative politeness the sphere of relevant redress is restricted to the imposition itself, in positive politeness the sphere of redress is widened to the appreciation of alter's wants in general or to the expression of similarity between ego's and alter's wants (Brown and Levinson 1978:106). Brown and Levinson argue, that:

“...the linguistic realizations of positive politeness are in many respects simply representative of the normal linguistic behaviour between intimates, where interest and approval of each other's personality, presuppositions indicating shared wants and shared knowledge, implicit claims to reciprocity of obligations or to reflexivity of wants, etc. are routinely exchanged. Perhaps the only feature that distinguishes positive-politeness redress from normal everyday intimate language behaviour is an element of exaggeration; this serves as a marker of the face-redress aspect of positive-politeness expression by indicating that even S can't with total sincerity say 'I want your wants', he can at least sincerely indicate 'I want your positive face to be satisfied.’” (Brown and Levinson, 1978:106)

Brown and Levinson (1978:106-107) add that the element of insincerity in exaggerated expressions of approval or interest (as in: 'How absolutely marvellous and exquisite your roses are, Mrs Bing!') is compensated for by the implication that the speaker really sincerely wants Mrs Bing's positive face to be enhanced. This perspective of intimacy is interesting when considering business letters, because the relationship between two business

partners is not usually very intimate and if it were, intimacy would be disregarded while doing business. In this sense, it could be expected that not many strategies of positive politeness would be used or are used rarely in business letters. Further, if and when they are used, it will be interesting to find out what they are like.

Brown and Levinson (1978:108) continue, that the association with intimate language usage gives the linguistics of positive politeness its redressive force. They claim (ibid.) that positive politeness utterances are used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy, to imply common ground or sharing of wants to a limited extent even between strangers who perceive themselves for the purposes of the interaction as somehow similar. This is true when considering business letters, because the sender and receiver have something in common; the sender wants to sell something to the receiver and receiver needs the item the sender is trying to sell. Brown and Levinson (1978:108) point out that the positive politeness techniques are usable not only for FTA redress but in general as a kind of social accelerator, where S or sender, in using them, indicates that s/he wants to 'come closer' to H or receiver. For the purposes of business letter also this social accelerator point of view seems suitable because in order to the transaction to be completed (selling the item, completing the deal) there has to be certain kind of closeness between the sender and receiver. It is difficult to sell anything if the business relationship does not exist; the receiver hardly buys the item from a total stranger without any knowledge about the sender, the company, the product, etc.

Brown and Levinson (1978:108-134) divide positive politeness into three strategies; claiming the common ground, conveying that sender and receiver are co-operators and fulfilling receiver's want. Further on these main strategies have several categories according to Brown and Levinson (1978:108-134).

2.3 Some shortcomings and strengths of Brown and Levinson's theory

Some researchers have found shortages in Brown and Levinson's theory and have criticised it (see, e.g. Matsumoto 1988, Kasper 1990 and Culpeper 1996). For instance, Culpeper (1996) criticises their model for being unable to analyse inference, which he suggests is the level at which a great deal of linguistic politeness and impoliteness occurs. In addition, the theory has been criticised of being too preoccupied with "losing face" and that there is hardly an equivalent discussion of "gaining face". Further, this choice of the metaphor of face has been criticised as ethnocentric. For example, Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey and Chua (1988:87) say that Brown and Levinson did not deal with the concept of 'face-respect' in their politeness theory.

Brown and Levinson's model of linguistic politeness has also been criticised for its inadequateness for cross-cultural analysis (see e.g. Mao 1994, Matsumoto 1988). This criticism is based on the view that because politeness is not the same across cultures therefore it is not processed or performed in the same way. In addition, Brown and Levinson's model of universals of linguistic politeness with its focus on negative and positive face cannot account for politeness behaviour in many cultures which do not have both of these aspects of face or do not have them to the same extent, (Mao 1994). Matsumoto (1988:405) also notes that in non-Western cultures there is not such a focus on individualism, and therefore one's membership of a group is of paramount importance rather than one's achieving of one's aims, which seems to be the focus in Brown and Levinson's models. In this sense the claim of the universality of their politeness theory has been challenged by many Asian linguists, for example Mao (1994), who says that Eastern people emphasise the harmony of society. Therefore, the universality of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory should be put in doubt when referring to Eastern cultures in intercultural communication, even though people with different thinking structures want to co-operate with each other, misunderstandings and conflicts are inevitable.

Nevertheless, despite of criticism and some possible weaknesses, Brown and Levinson's theory provides the most efficient politeness analysis tools for my study. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory offers a wide variety of empirical examples and therefore it is highly applicable for a real-life data. In addition, Brown and Levinson's model has been used in similar kind of studies before because of its cross-cultural scope which gives a beneficial viewpoint for my analysis of business letters written by native and non-native speakers.

In the next chapter I will present the previous research done on politeness in business letters.

3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON POLITENESS IN BUSINESS WRITING

3.1 General

A great deal of research has been published on politeness in different fields of study, for example in communications, linguistics, anthropology and social psychology. The politeness theories have been mainly applied to the analysis of spoken language and interaction in non-professional settings (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, as stated in Pilegaard 1997). For example, Liggett (1985) examined ways that speaking/writing relationships both help and hinder effective communication, and argued for more research on spoken and written business communication. Some research has been done on professional settings, but most of it too has concentrated on spoken language (Louhiala-Salminen 1996, Maier 1992, Yli-Jokipii 1994). One reason for the small amount of research on business writing is the notable lack of authentic business material for the analysis (Yli-Jokipii 1991:68-69). Companies are not willing to give material for the analysis even though confidentiality would be ensured. Therefore more co-operation is needed in this field in order to get studies based on empirical evidence. Next I will discuss the previous research conducted on politeness in business writing and then move on to previous research on politeness in business writing of non-native and native speakers.

3.2 Research on politeness in business writing

As mentioned above, there has not been much research on politeness in professional writing. In addition, the studies may deal with politeness simply as part of style or as courtesy and the analysis is not very detailed, or they may use some other politeness theory than Brown and Levinson's theory.

Kilpatrick (1984) surveyed current practices in international business correspondence in American (36 sample letters) and foreign companies (32 sample letters). Kilpatrick does not use any politeness theory in her analysis. Instead, she concentrates on investigating how American companies deal with language, translation and cultural problems, part of which involve politeness. All these authentic business letters were analysed for format, writing style and technical differences. Kilpatrick found out (1984:41) that the most popular style of salutation used by both American and foreign companies was "Dear (Title/Surname)". She also notes that 31 % of letters from foreign countries contained the formal salutation "Dear Sir" compared with only 9 % of letters written by Americans. The stylistic analysis revealed that generally business letters written by American firms were more formal, personal and less "flowery" and foreign letters tended to be less personal, more courteous and flattering (Kilpatrick 1984:42-43).

Sterkel (1988:17-38) investigated the differences in writing styles between male and female business communication students. Sterkel's investigation of writing style included besides number of courtesy words also some other aspects of polite language use. For example, the number of passive verbs, number of superlatives, negative words, hostile verbs and use of directness/indirectness were counted. Sterkel's result was that men's and women's writing styles in business communications do not differ significantly.

Varner (1988:55-65) compared American and French business correspondence and found similarities and differences. For instance, she found that (1988:64) French openings and endings of letters are very polite and very formal which might seem to Americans old-fashioned and stilted. Therefore Americans should use a more formal style when writing to French business people. Varner claims (1988:55) that many of the differences result from differences in the culture and values. She continues (1988:55) that it is

important to understand the business communication principles of other countries in order to write letters that are effective in those countries.

Pilegaard (1997) based his analysis of the business letters on a modified version of Brown and Levinson's categories. He examined the principles and practices of politeness in business letters and used a textlinguistic perspective to see how politeness strategies combine within sentences (Pilegaard 1997). Pilegaard (1997) found that the level, form and distribution of positive and negative politeness correlated with sender status and varied as a function of the dynamics of the course of business communication. He argued that politeness strategies are used in business letters to prepare the ground for the formulation of the letter's main request, redress the face-threatening act of requesting and also to round-off the letter (Pilegaard 1997:241). According to Pilegaard (1997:242-243), the coupling of situationality and intertextuality within Brown and Levinson's framework may shift attention to an analysis of the dynamics of interactionary patterns in written communication. It is a particularly productive approach in cross-cultural communication where communicative failure may be related to differences in usage, which preserve the semantic meaning at the expense of pragmatic intent (Pilegaard 1997:243).

Hong (1998) conducted an empirical study on politeness strategies in Chinese business correspondence. By analysing the linguistic/stylistic features of the letters, she found a range of various politeness strategies employed in the writing of the correspondence (Hong 1998). She argues that such a variety of politeness strategies relate strongly to Chinese polite values and business etiquette (Hong 1998:321). Therefore, in order to achieve pragmatically/socially appropriate letter writing skills in Chinese, a writer needs to acquire not only the knowledge of the language but also the proper cultural understanding of China (Hong 1998:322).

3.3 Research on politeness in non-native versus native speakers' business writing

Studies and comparisons of non-native and native speakers' politeness in business writing seem to attract more interest than before because of globalisation and technology-aided communication. Yli-Jokipii (1994) reports on a confusing aspect on this field of study: the data used in analysis varies from writings of business professionals to job applications and sample texts written by students. She points out that this kind of studies are remote from the professionals' writing skills and tasks in business organisations (Yli-Jokipii 1994:57). Besides Yli-Jokipii's view, for example, some studies analyse and compare writings of two different languages. Such studies do not study differences between native and non-native speakers but more of the universality of politeness.

It has been discovered that the apologies of Finnish business writers' in English were more apologetic than the situation would have required and implied a greater offence than there actually was (Morris 1991, as stated in Yli-Jokipii 1994:28). For example, Sims and Guice (1992) noticed in their study of native and non-native letters that the letters written by non-natives had exaggerated politeness in them. In the same way, Carrell and Konneker (1981) have shown that non-native speakers show an oversensitivity in the area of politeness in English. As a result of this, it could happen that the native reader will get an ingratiating, or even resigned image on the writer. Non-native writers, on the other hand, may think that it is better to be overwhelmingly polite instead of taking the risk of being rude. Therefore, for them, being too polite is wiser than being too little.

Yli-Jokipii (see e.g. 1991, 1994, 1996) has carried out several studies on business writing and politeness. For example, she (1994) investigated requests and their linguistic variation in natural business writing in two languages (English and Finnish) and three cultures (British, American and

Finnish). She had two corpora: a corpus of real-life material which was compared with a corpus of textbook data. She found out that there are cultural differences between Finnish and Anglo-American linguistic preferences in business writing, most of them relate to attitudes towards self and others in communication (Yli-Jokipii 1994:258). Further, she (1994:258) noted that native writers should be made aware of the possibility that non-native writers may be transferring discourse properties of their native language to their performance in a non-native language. She continued that in the cross-cultural settings acceptance and appreciation should be encouraged instead of degrading (Yli-Jokipii 1994:258). In another study, Yli-Jokipii (1996) contrasted requests in business letters and telefax messages in Finnish, British and American cultures. Her study reports on notable findings concerning the influence of power and social distance in business writing, for example of the passive orientation which is frequent in negative power situations (Yli-Jokipii 1996:318). Furthermore, the Finnish writers seem to remove power from themselves to the other even in situations where they would be entitled to powerful linguistic behaviour in their professional roles. This behaviour differs from British and American groups (Yli-Jokipii 1996:318-319). In addition, the Finnish business professional occasionally uses non-animate participants, such as the name of the reader's company, which are practically absent in the English requests (Yli-Jokipii 1996:319). She also notes that the Finnish writer identifies with the company and employs the exclusive, corporate *we* (Yli-Jokipii 1996:320). According to Brown and Levinson (1978:204), the use of 'business we' is one effective way of impersonalizing the sender and the receiver, and thus a way of being polite.

Park et al. (1998) examined rhetorical differences in the organisation and style of complaint letters written in English by Korean and American managers. For the Koreans English was their second language. Park et al. (1998:338) found out that important differences exist in rhetorical choices between the two groups. Whereas the American writers used a direct

organisational pattern, the standard Korean pattern was indirect and tended to delay the reader's discovery of the main point. American writers tended to impersonalise both the writer and reader by referring to the company name, using the plural 'we' or employing passive voice (Park et al. 1998:340). In contrast, most of the Korean writers impersonalised the complainer while personalising the reader. Park et al. (1998:342) suggest that native writers must be sensitive to features of non-native writers which can present obstacles to efficient communication in international business.

Maier (1992) compared business letters written by a group of native speakers of English to those written by non-native speakers. Her analysis revealed that the most striking differences between the native and non-native speaker letters was in style (Maier 1992:194). To be more specific, the native speaker letters appeared to be more professional whereas several of the non-native speaker letters gave the impression of being somehow too casual, too personal, or too detached, according to Maier (1992:194). She also found that the used strategies differ between the speakers, the native speakers used more mitigated negative politeness strategies and the non-native speakers used more potentially risky positive politeness strategies (Maier 1992:202). Maier (1992:189) concludes that even a grammatically flawless business writing of non-native speakers may be perceived negatively by the native reader because of their inappropriate use of politeness strategies. However, it must be noted that Maier used in her study an elicited data instead of authentic business letters.

Paarlahti (1998) examined politeness strategies in business letters written by native and non-native speakers. The letters for the study were written by Finnish and American students of business, in other words the corpus she used was not written by business professionals. She found out that there are differences in the politeness strategies used by native and non-native speakers: Finnish speakers used fewer strategies and they relied more heavily on other strategies than the native speakers (Paarlahti 1998:99). In addition, Paarlahti (1998:99,67) notes that Finnish speakers expressed

criticism too directly and used bald-on-record strategy. She emphasises the importance of pragmatic features of language for the learners, in other words, whom one can talk to, about what kind of topics and what kind of language is appropriate in those situations (Paarlahti 1998:100).

Many of the existing studies on business writing between the non-native and native speakers report on inappropriate use of politeness strategies by the non-native speakers. They use less strategies than the native speakers, the used strategies are inappropriate or differ from the strategies used by native speakers, and so on. If the native speakers' writing style is considered a norm, then it seems that the non-native speakers should improve their language skills. However, it has been noted that the proficiency in foreign languages, for example English in Finland, by today's young people is much better than 20 years ago probably because of the globalisation, increased traveling, better teaching, and the Internet and computers. In addition, good language skills are expected from business professionals. Therefore the results of future studies may not show big differences between the speaker groups.

It can be seen that many studies which have analysed politeness in business writing finally emphasise the importance of cross-cultural understanding. The notion of culture as having an impact on language use is not new. However, when regarding comparison of and studies on writing of the native and the non-native speakers, the influence of culture should be taken into consideration even more.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

4.1 Research questions

There are specific rules to be followed in business letters. Certain conventions and standards are used for example in the opening and the closing sections of the letter. It is common to use for example "*Dear*" and the receiver's name in the beginning, "*Yours truly*," and the sender's name in the end, and so on. Many books have been written on business communication that give advice on letter forms. However, it is more difficult to give advice on the style and content of letters (Maier 1992). According to Hagge and Kostelnick (1989), business writing textbooks recommend only "please and thank you" conventions, they scarcely acknowledge linguistic politeness strategies, the fact which was mentioned also above.

Politeness can be divided into politeness strategies, the term introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978). When a person writes a letter in his/her non-native language, s/he does not necessarily have a good knowledge on which politeness strategies should be used and which should not, how many strategies should be used and in which part of the letter they should be used. Naturally a proper use of the strategies can be learnt and some instructions can be also found in the literature.

A central hypothesis in this study is that the letters written by the non-native writers will have too many politeness strategies and conventional politeness in them and/or the politeness strategies used in the letters are inappropriate compared with the letters written by the native speakers.

In order to test this hypothesis, the present study will attempt to find an answer to the following research questions: What politeness strategies are used in the letters written by native and non-native speakers? How are the strategies used? Are there differences in the use of politeness strategies

between the native speakers and the non-native speakers? In addition to the politeness strategies found in the letters the present study will include the investigation of deferential and respectful style used by the writers. By this is meant phrases such as '*at your convenience*', '*we look forward to*', using modal auxiliaries (e.g. '*would*', '*might*') and if-clauses.

4.2 Research material

The material consists of ten authentic quotation letters written in English by the Finnish sales personnel of Finnish industrial company and of ten authentic quotation letters written in English by the company's personnel in the USA. From now on NNS letters refer to the letters written by non-native speakers (Finnish) and NS letters refer to the letters written by native speakers (Americans). One NNS letter had a one page long attachment which was excluded from the analysis. The letters will be examined for politeness strategies and deferential style used in them followed by the comparison of the analysis results of the two sets of letters.

The letters written by the non-native speakers can be found in the Appendix 1 and the letters written by the native speakers can be found in the Appendix 2. All of them fulfil Yli-Jokipii's (1991:65-66) criteria for business letters; they are typewritten or wordprocessed, rather than hand-written, they have a date, identify the recipient, and specify the sender in the form of a signature. In addition all letters are written (or printed) on company's letter head with company's logo and all letters have contact data printed on the top or at the bottom of page. Many letters have marking '*cc*' and name or names of people in the bottom which means '*carbon copy*', in other words copy of letter has been sent to those listed after the marking.

Structure of letters

As already mentioned, there are certain conventions and standards in letter writing. All letters follow the traditional letter outline which can be roughly

divided into five sections: salutation, opening, body, closing and complimentary closing. Salutations and complimentary closings will be excluded from the politeness analysis because they are formalities and do not have much to be analysed, nevertheless some remarks will be made on them in chapter 5.1 (pp. 33).

The analysed quotation letters are dated between 1995-2000 (one letter from '95, '96 and '97, six letters from '98, nine from '99 and two from year 2000). For the purpose of confidentiality the names, addresses, product names, quotation numbers and prices of all the letters will be left out, and only the country of the recipient is kept. The NNS letters were sent to eight different countries; USA, India, Indonesia, Sweden, UK, Korea and two letters both to Canada and China. All the NS letters were sent to the recipient's in different parts of USA. Both the recipients and senders of the letters are engineers.

The Finnish industrial company in question is a large company, manufacturing and selling process machines to both Finnish and international customers. The company has offices and factories both in Finland and in other countries, including the USA. The company's main product is from a special field of industry and the process machine costs millions of euros. Therefore selling of process machines differs from selling, for example, a book. The emphasis of selling arguments is more on the technical side.

The company's selling material consists of the support material (brochures, other leaflets) and of the quotation material. The quotation material consists of the technical specification, price information and sales and quotation letters. The support material is used first in the selling process and second the quotation material, but all the material are meant to work together. Yli-Jokipii (1994:50-51) groups various phases of a business transaction into three categories and according to her, quotation belongs to a pre-deal stage.

Sales and quotation letters are written by the sales personnel, usually by the head of sales. In Finland the letters which are written in English are rarely checked by the company's translation office or linguists but the engineers write the letters themselves. Letter writing is repetitive work that is done every day. Sometimes a basic template is used for the letter and then specific details are added that apply to the particular case. The aim of the letters is to sell the product and keep up the relationship with the customers and business partners. Quotation letters accompany the technical specification and usually they are rather short. The average length of quotation letters of the analysis written by natives is 1.15 pages and average length of non-native quotation letters is 1.7 pages. The difference in length will be discussed later in chapter 6 (pp. 77).

The use of e-mail has increased in the company and a pdf format is used frequently when sending selling material to the customers or business partners. However, the company will always send some sales material on paper, too.

4.3 Analytic framework

The comparison and analysis of letters will be based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, and partly on the model by Pilegaard (1997) which is a modified version of Brown and Levinson's theory. Pilegaard's model (1997) is helpful because he examined written language and more particularly business letters. In my analysis I have adopted Pilegaard's (1997:226-227) view of weightiness of FTAs in business letters which will be presented below.

Distance (D), power (P) and the ranking of the imposition (R) are the three variables when calculating the weightiness of face-threatening acts according to Brown and Levinson (1978:79). In Pilegaard's (1997:226) view, the distance is determined by the socio-temporal and socio-spatial nature of the contact (established or new contact), the intimacy of contact

(formal or informal) and the character of previous contacts (letter, phone, personal) between the sender and the receiver of letters. The weight of the D-parameter declines during a typical, successfully conducted course of business, but a distinction must be made between a new and an established business relationship, Pilegaard (1997:226) claims. He continues that the newer the relationship, the greater is the scope for reducing distance, in general (Pilegaard, *ibid.*). In new business relationships the distance stays virtually constant after the steep fall of a new relationship. Pilegaard also argues (1997:226) that a certain distance always persists in long-standing business relationships. When considering the present study, the D-parameter is medium size, because quotation letters are not the first contact with the buyer. In many letters a reference is made to previous contacts; meetings, discussions, telephone conversations and letters.

According to Pilegaard (1997:224):

"...the situational context in which a business letter is formulated closely guides the strategic choice of precisely that verbal behavior which maximally satisfies the speaker's communicative intentions at any given time during a typical course of transactions." (Pilegaard 1997:224)

He continues (1997:224) that these transactions usually evolve as a series of steps that follow each other both logically and temporally. Therefore, a seller's first contact with a new buyer will often be by sending a sales letter which may be followed by a quotation (Pilegaard 1997:224). If the buyer does not pay, the seller will send a reminder (Pilegaard 1997:224). Pilegaard argues (1997:226) that the power variable is connected to these different phases and it changes as the business relationship develops. When the parties are in the so called 'making contact' phase and seller sends a sales letter, the receiver decides whether to respond to the letter or not and is hence in power (Pilegaard 1997:226). Pilegaard notes (*ibid.*) that a distinction must be made between letters sent by sellers (sales letters) and letters sent by buyers (inquiries). The seller will be expected to respond to inquiries because s/he has a genuine interest in selling her/his products or

services, Pilegaard describes (1997:226). Yli-Jokipii (1994, 1996) also distinguishes different phases of the business relationship and power variables, so she seems to agree with Pilegaard. Although she uses different terms, for example, 'making contact' phase is called as 'pre-deal' stage (Yli-Jokipii 1994:50, 1996:313).

Quotation letters belong to the second phase of business relationship, they are either sellers' answers to buyers' inquiries or sent after sales letter to the buyer. According to Pilegaard (1997:226), power may lie with either the sender or receiver depending on the nature of the transaction and market (buyer's or seller's) and on who needs the deal more in each particular situation. When considering the product that the Finnish industrial company is selling, the company in question is not the only manufacturer on the market. Therefore the market is in my opinion buyer's market; and the power lies with the receiver.

The third factor, ranking of imposition, is ranked by the degree to which the request interferes with the rules and norms of business convention which are governed by custom outside a contract and by law when the parties are in contract according to Pilegaard (1997:227). The impositions' weight therefore reflects in which phase of business relationship the parties are; are they 'making contact', 'negotiating' or 'in conflict', Pilegaard claims (1997:227). In addition, the weight of imposition correlates with the sender's power status at the point in question, Pilegaard (1997:227) concludes. Because the parties are 'negotiating' and power lies with the receiver, as mentioned above, the weight of imposition is low.

Now when the values of the three factors are substituted for the weightiness of FTA formula, $W_x = D(S, H) + P(S, H) + R_x$, we will get the weightiness of FTAs for the letters of the present study. Imposition (R) = low, power (P) = sender low; receiver high, and distance (D) = medium which means that the weightiness of FTAs is medium.

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory suggests (1978:65) that everyone has positive and negative face which are threatened by certain acts (FTAs). As mentioned earlier, these FTAs can be minimized with different kind of politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1978:65). The size of the threat varies and so does the redressive action of strategies, thus the speaker or writer can choose a right kind of strategy for a particular FTA (Brown and Levinson, *ibid.*). If the act is very threatening, speaker generally chooses very redressive strategy. The scale of politeness varies from not doing the FTA to doing it without any redressive action according to Brown and Levinson (1978:65). Pilegaard (1997:228) concentrates on examining requests in business letters and says that the positive politeness strategies are not necessarily redressive of face wants that are directly linked to the FTAs. Brown and Levinson (1978:106) also point out the same notion, as mentioned earlier in chapter 2.2.4. In addition, Pilegaard (1997:228) argues that positive politeness strategies serve the wider purpose of building and maintaining a cooperative business atmosphere.

If we now consider the letters of the present study and FTAs found in them the nature of the letters has to be discussed first. All the letters of the present study are quotation letters which accompany either a technical specification or budget quotation sent for the probable customer. The technical specification means a list stating all different parts and equipment of process machine which will be included in the purchase; for example recommendations, dimensioning data, power requirements, instructions for preassembly, and delivery standards. The list of spare parts only can be 90 pages long. Technical specification is hundreds of pages long, but the quotation letters are approximately 1 page long. According to Pilegaard (1997:224), quotation letters follow sales letters and they, for instance, state price and terms.

The FTAs of letters vary both in amount and in nature. Some letters have only one FTA, the others several. For example, in NS, Letter I the sender writes that:

(...)The technical material includes a short list of equipment included in the scope, drive power calculation and a multi-colour quotation drawing. We understand that a full, detailed technical specification is required in a later stage. We are ready to prepare that. However, our opinion is that this will be done after we have had a technical discussion with you and your staff on the projects. We believe that this is your wish as well. (...)

It seems that FTA of the example paragraph is that the preparation of a full, detailed technical specification will be done later, after there has been technical discussions. In contrast, the letter below seems to have several FTAs:

(...) The price has somewhat increased from the previous quotation due to scope completions such as [list] (...) In the previous meeting, a question was raised about the need of rebalancing of rolls for the new higher production speed. The quotation, however, doesn't include any roll rebalancing work or strengthening of roll supports or reconditioning of parts and components that are not "touched" in the scope of the rebuild. (...) (NNS, Letter IX)

Brown and Levinson (1978) have a narrow focus in their analysis and they operate in relation to the central FTA on the sentence level according to Pilegaard (1997:231). Pilegaard takes in his study (1997) a broader view and analyses politeness strategies on the text level. Interestingly, he notes (1997:233) that the negative politeness strategies are linked more specifically to the face-threatening act and tend to appear within the sentences where requests are made, expect in quotations. Because the analysed letters have FTAs, they have also different kinds of politeness strategies for softening and minimizing these threats. However, letters have different kinds of FTAs, instead of having e.g. requests only, therefore a more detailed specification of FTAs as per letters does not change or affect the analysis of politeness strategies. Furthermore, selling can be regarded as the overall FTA of the letters, after all, that is the aim of the letters.

5 RESULTS

In this chapter I will present the analysis and results. Firstly, I will have a look on the openings and closings used in the letters. Secondly, I will move on to describing the strategies and categories found in the letters, with the help of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Pilegaard's application of it. Thirdly, I will present the results by the strategies, starting from negative politeness, then positive politeness, and finally bald-on-record strategy. Off-record strategy will not be presented because there were no cases found in the data. Fourthly, I will compare the results between the two writer groups.

5.1 Openings and closings of letters

Business correspondence textbooks often give advice on how to open and close letters. For example, they advice on how to open a letter if you do not know the recipient's name or gender. Some textbooks argue that if you open with '*Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms + surname*' then you should end with '*Yours sincerely*' (e.g. Ashley 1993:5), but according to Moon (1999:67), this depends on the situation and the relationship between the sender and the receiver. The level of acquaintance determines the way in which the writer chooses to address the recipient (see e.g. Yli-Jokipii 1994 for discussion of this). In other words, social distance influences terms of address. Table 1 below presents all salutations and closings used in the data, and their number of occurrence. One salutation of a NNS letter was unrecognisable because of confidentiality. In addition, there were two ambiguous cases in NNS letters' salutations which are marked with a question mark in the table. One salutation of a NNS letter (IV) was unclear in the sense that the recipient's name can be either surname or first name. In the other NNS letter (IX) it was difficult to say did the salutation have title + surname or title, first name + surname, but presumably the salutation is title + surname because of the lack of space.

Table 1. Salutations and closings used in letters

Salutation	NNS letters	NS letters	Sum
<i>First name</i>	IV?	IXX, XXIII, XXIV, XXVIII	1? + 4
<i>First name + surname</i>		XXV	0 + 1
<i>Title + surname</i>	II, V, IX?	XX, XXI, XXII, XXVI, XXVII	3? + 5
<i>Not recognized</i>	I		1 + 0
<i>'Dear sirs'</i>	III, VI, VII, VIII, X		5 + 0
Closing			
<i>Yours sincerely</i>	II, VI, VIII, IX, X		5 + 0
<i>Sincerely</i>	I, IV, V	IXX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVIII	3 + 8
<i>Yours truly</i>	III	XXIII, XXVII	1 + 2
<i>Yours very truly</i>	VII		1 + 0

The last column of Table 1 sums up all the used salutations and closings first in NNS letters and then in NS letters. As can be seen from the Table 1, non-native writers used mostly in closings '*Yours sincerely*', whereas '*Sincerely*' was clearly the favourite closing used by the native writers. None of the writers followed the advice mentioned earlier that if you open with '*Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms + surname*' then you should end with '*Yours sincerely*'. There was more variation in closings in NNS letters whereas NS letters used only two different kinds of closings.

The most popular way of opening letter for non-native writers was '*Dear sirs*' while native writers preferred in their salutations title + surname. The frequent use of '*Dear sirs*' is interesting, because careful inspection of the letters shows that although most of the recipient's information is blackened out, an attention line can be seen in the letter head where it says: '*Attn. Mr.*', '*Attn: Mr.*' or '*Attention: Mr.*'. This happens in four out of five, and the fifth letter which also uses '*Dear sirs*' opening has all the recipient's information blackened except for the country. It may be possible that attention lines contain the whole name of the recipient and if this is the case, the writer should use the recipient's name in the opening. However, no conclusions can be made from this because of its uncertainty, and besides, this is not the cornerstone of my analysis. Nevertheless, the closings and openings of the

letters seem to show that the level of acquaintance is greater between the recipient and the native writers compared with the level of acquaintance of the non-native writers and their recipients. In addition, the salutations and closings of letters have an important role in creating the overall tone and style of the letter and influence the level of deferentiality.

5.2 Number of politeness strategies used in the letters

Brown and Levinson (1978) divide politeness into four main strategies: off-record, bald-on-record, negative politeness and positive politeness. No occurrences of the off-record strategy were found in the data. A total of 406 politeness strategies were found in the letters written by the non-native speakers (NNS) and 231 strategies were found in the letters written by the native speakers (NS). The average length of letters written by the non-native speakers was 1.7 pages and the native speakers' letters' average length was 1.15 pages. Because the average length of letters was different, it cannot be said that the non-native speakers used more politeness strategies in their letters. See Table 2 below.

Table 2. Number of politeness strategies used in the letters

	NNS	NS
Negative politeness	255	145
Positive politeness	134	75
Bald-on-record	17	11
Total	406	231
Average length of letters (pages)	1.7	1.15
Amount of words	3600	1800
Average amount of words/pages	190	150
Strategies/words/pages	2.14	1.54

5.3 Negative politeness strategies used in the letters

There were altogether nine different categories of negative politeness strategies used in the letters. The categories were: impersonalizing sender and receiver, use of passives, use of business 'we', stating the FTA as a

general rule, questioning and hedging, minimizing the imposition, giving deference, apologizing, and being conventionally indirect. These categories belong to three main strategies, communicating sender's want not to impinge the on receiver which includes impersonalising sender and receiver, use of passives and business 'we', stating the FTA as a general rule and apologizing. The second strategy, not coercing receiver, includes questioning and hedging, minimising the imposition and giving deference. The third strategy of being direct includes category of being conventionally indirect. Each of the main strategies and also the categories will be presented below. In addition, one new category was found in the letters. The category was named as 'giving credentials' and it will be explained in the end of chapter 5.3.1. Table 3 below shows the found categories and strategies.

Table 3. Negative politeness strategies used in the letters

Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver
Impersonalising the sender and the receiver
<i>Passives and circumstantial voices</i>
<i>Business 'we'</i>
Stating the FTA as a general rule
Apologizing
Not coercing the receiver
Not assuming the receiver is willing or able to do X
<i>Questioning and hedging: hedging, if clauses, hedging opinions, quality hedges and relevance hedges</i>
Minimizing the imposition
Give deference
Being direct
Being indirect
Being conventionally indirect
New category: giving credentials

Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver

As mentioned above, communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver can be divided into four main categories: apologizing, impersonalising the speaker (sender) and the hearer (receiver), stating the FTA as a general rule and nominalising. The first three categories were identified in the letters but no occurrences of nominalization was found in

the letters. The strategy of communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver and its categories used in the letters will be explained below.

Brown and Levinson (1978:192) define that one way to partially satisfy the receiver's negative face demands is to indicate that the sender is aware of them and taking them into account in her/his decision to communicate the FTA. The sender thus communicates that any infringement of the receiver's territory is recognized as such and is not undertaken lightly. There are two basic ways to do this; apologizing for the infringement and implicitly conveying a reluctance on the part of the sender to impose on the receiver (Brown and Levinson 1978:192). They continue (ibid.) that the latter way can be done by dissociating either the sender or the receiver or both from the FTA and thus the speaker (or sender) implicates that s/he is reluctant to impinge. Brown and Levinson explain this by saying (1978:192) that the dissociation can be achieved in a variety of ways, for example by impersonalising the sender and/or receiver, by stating the FTA as a general rule and by nominalization.

Apologizing: Firstly, apologizing can be done in several ways and Brown and Levinson (1978:192-195) list four of them: admitting the impingement, indicating reluctance, giving overwhelming reasons and begging forgiveness. A direct or a straight-forward apologizing can be done in spoken English with '*sorry*' but written language prefers more formal '*apologize*'. Maier (1992:195-196) reports in her study that the non-native speakers expressed they regret by using the word '*sorry*' which gives a casual tone and impression of not recognizing the seriousness of the situation. Whereas the native speakers preferred '*apologize*' thus indicating that it is more appropriate word choice when apologizing (Maier 1992:195-196). Only one occurrence of apologizing was found in the letters and it will be presented in chapter 5.3.1.

Impersonalizing the sender and the receiver: Dissociating either the sender or receiver or both from the FTA results in a variety of avoiding the pronouns 'I' and 'you', Brown and Levinson (1978:195) point out. For instance, instead of saying: '*Also we have done wording changes...*' the sender says: '*Also there are wording changes...*', in other words the sender removes reference from himself, it is not mentioned who has made the wording changes. Below are two sentences which belong to this strategy:

- 1) After paper machine *there is* Rereeler, Off-Machine multinip Calender and Winder. (NNS, Letter VI)
- 2) As requested we have prepared this proposal to reflect our firm offer to you; however, *there are* a number of technical issues that we wish to qualify with you during the planned meeting on January 21, 1999, scheduled for 1:00 PM at your XX mill. (NS, Letter XXVI)

Brown and Levinson's theory describes impersonalisation (1978:195-211) and there seems to be some overlapping with categories of impersonal verbs and circumstantial voices. Therefore I have counted all cases similar to examples 1) and 2) above as general cases of impersonalizing the sender and the receiver and have not made the more detailed classification. However, I will present these categories here.

The use of impersonal verbs is one way of avoiding 'I' and 'you'. For example, Brown and Levinson point out (1978:196) that in many languages, agent deletion is allowed not only in imperatives but also in other verb forms that encode acts which are intrinsically FTAs. According to them (1978:197), this happens in English as well, when verbs taking dative agents are often used with the dative agent deleted, for example:

- It appears/seems (to me) that...
- It looks (to me) like...
- It would be desirable (for me)...

Using passives and circumstantial voices: Another example of impersonalization is the use of passives and circumstantial voices. Brown and Levinson argue (1978:199) that the passive coupled with a rule of agent deletion is perhaps in English the best way to avoid reference to persons

involved in FTAs. It may be used to remove direct reference to the speaker or to the hearer, as in the following pair:

I regret that
It is regretted that

Or to remove direct reference to the hearer or receiver, as in:

if you can
if it is possible

Passives were frequently used in both writer groups, and it was the second most popular way of impersonalization in NNS and NS letters. Brown and Levinson (1978:199) add that the passive may be used by means of a further deletion rule for dative noun phrases, as in:

Further details should have been sent (to us by you)
That letter must be typed immediately (by you for me)

The deletion of dative noun phrases was used also in the letters, for example in:

3) We understand that a full, detailed technical specification *is required* in a later stage. (NNS, Letter II)

where *'by us'* and *'for you'* have been deleted.

Besides impersonal verbs and passives Brown and Levinson describe circumstantial voices (1978:201) and talk about introducing a so called dummy to take the place of the superficial subject; e.g. *'it'* in sentence *'it seems'*. They continue that:

“The social motivation would be basically the same for all cases, which would explain the stylistic homogeneity of phrases like *'It would be desirable (for me)'*, *'It would be appreciated (by me)'*, and *'It seems (to me)'* as they occur in English business letters.” (Brown and Levinson 1978:201)

Brown and Levinson (1978:201) suggest that one reason for using a *'dummy'* noun could be the social pressure to bring some crucial noun phrases (especially those that refer to sender, receiver, their kin, their actions, their belongings, etc.) into syntactic positions where they can be

deleted. Brown and Levinson conclude (1978:201) that to a lesser extent, the same pressure would motivate the same rules in order to achieve defocusing rather than deletion.

Using business ‘we’: The fourth way of impersonalizing the sender and the receiver is by using plural forms of ‘*you*’ and ‘*I*’ pronouns (Brown and Levinson 1978:203). A good example of this strategy is the use of so called ‘business we’ illustrated by the following three sentences:

- 4) If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact *us*. (NNS, Letter I)
- 5) *We* are ready to prepare that. (NNS, Letter II)
- 6) The general areas covered in *our* proposal include a X Former, a new 4th press, dryer section modifications, and the high speed coater splicing unwind. (NS, Letter XXVI)

All these sentences use the 1st person plural pronoun instead of the 1st person singular. However, only one person has signed the letter, so what could be reason for using plural instead of singular? In addition, there were instances in the data when sender used both pronouns in the same sentence, as in the following: 7) *I* hope *our* proposal helps you in the finalizing the investment proposal and please do not hesitate to contact *us* for any further information. (NNS, Letter IX)

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:207), the phenomenon is called pluralization of the ‘*you*’ and ‘*I*’ pronouns which includes the widespread use of V pronouns to singular addressees and the widespread phenomenon of ‘*we*’ used to indicate ‘*I*’ + powerful. Besides the royal ‘*we*’ which is rather rare, there is the episcopal ‘*we*’ and the business ‘*we*’, Brown and Levinson (1978: 207) argue. The use of business ‘*we*’ was the most popular way of impersonalization in both letter groups. A large amount of business ‘*we*’ ‘s in letters may be due to the chosen method of analysis, in other words all the cases and forms of 1st person plural were counted. In addition, in some cases the name of company was counted too, if it was used as a subject and like an active person, as in: 8) “The actual schedule will be determined

in joint discussions between the mill project team, the erector and *the Company*.” (NS, Letter XXV).

Brown and Levinson continue (1978:207) that there may be two distinct sources for business ‘we’: one is that the ‘we’ that expresses the nature of the ‘corporation sole’ or the jural accompaniments of high office - ‘we’ as office and incumbent and predecessors. The other is the ‘we’ of the group; a reminder that ‘I do not stand alone’ (Brown and Levinson 1978:207). Brown and Levinson suggest (1978:207) that the business ‘we’ perhaps attempts to draw on both sources of connotations of power. They divide (Brown and Levinson 1978:207-208) this business ‘we’ to exclusive ‘we’ which is an enjoined group ‘we’ that reflects the ideals of the solidary extended family, either as a powerful group behind the speaker and inclusive ‘we’ which is like a partnership. In the example sentences from the letter the ‘we’ seems to be exclusive.

Brown and Levinson (1978:204) have found possible motives for the phenomenon of which the most probable is that in all societies where a person’s social status is fundamentally linked to membership in a group, to treat persons as representatives of a group rather than as relatively powerless individuals would be to refer to their social standing and the backing that they derive from their group. In my opinion this is particularly true in today’s society which is very much work based and a person’s value is determined by his/her capabilities and status at work. Further, Brown and Levinson say (1978:204) that in some societies the individual’s social standing is so much derived from the group membership that for one to take the life of a member of another group leads to indiscriminate retaliation on any member of the slayer’s group, without preference for the slayer himself. In such social settings, persons are always representatives, and the motivation for a plural ‘you’ of deference or distance would be the same as for the plural of the ‘we’ of corporations and corporations sole, Brown and Levinson conclude (1978:204). All the analyzed letters have the tendency to

use 'you' of receiver and business 'we' of the sender. Repetitive use of 'you' is an old convention in business writing; it makes messages more personal.

Stating the FTA as a general rule: The last way of dissociating either sender or receiver or both from the FTA which will be presented here is carried out by stating FTA as an instance of some general social rule, regulation or obligation (Brown and Levinson 1978:211). Hence pronouns are avoided as in the sentence below:

Passengers will please refrain from smoking during the flight.

There were only three occurrences of stating the FTA as a general rule category in the data and all of them were in NNS letters. Brown and Levinson continue (1978:212) that the imposition itself may be represented as merely a case of general obligation, like when teacher says to a pupil:

We don't jump on chairs, we sit on them, Kelly.

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:212) the example above claims that the speaker is not imposing, but rather is merely drawing attention to the existence of a rule of not-jumping-on-chairs which is independent of both speaker and hearer. Brown and Levinson refer (1978:212) also to indirectness into which this phenomenon of stating the FTA as general rule merges.

Being direct

Being conventionally indirect: According to Brown and Levinson (1978:177), another category of ways of redressing receiver's negative face want is used when the proposed FTA involves predicating receiver's act. This can happen when requesting receiver's aid, or offering receiver something which requires her/his acceptance, Brown and Levinson (1978:177) explain. For such FTAs, negative-face redress may be made by avoiding coercing receiver's response. One option for doing this is by explicitly giving the receiver the choice *not* to do the act A. This strategy further on produces the subordinate want to *be indirect* which in clashing with *being direct* gives output strategy of being conventionally indirect

(1978:177). Brown and Levinson (1978:137) explain that conventional indirectness is used by speaker to solve opposing tensions of giving hearer a way out by being indirect and the desire to go on record. Conventional indirectness means the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings which differ from their literal meanings. For example, *Can you open the door?* is understood as a request instead of an inquiry about the hearer's abilities.

If we compare four sentences and try to find out which one is most polite:

The roll is ready for shipment on 27th May.
 The roll will be ready for shipment on 27th May.
 The roll can be ready for shipment on 27th May.
 The roll would be ready for shipment on 27th May.

It seems that the first sentence simply states a fact straight-forwardly, a situation of shipment of roll and it is ready on a certain date. The next sentence seems to promise that the roll is ready for shipment on that particular date in the future. The third sentence seems to express a possibility that it is possible to ship the roll on 27th May, if desired. On the other hand, the sentence leaves a receiver possibility of opting out, the roll is not necessarily shipped. The last sentence is indirect compared with the first one and it seems to indicate less probability for the shipment. Therefore it seems that '*would be ready*' used in the last sentence is more polite than '*is ready*'.

Brown and Levinson's definition of conventional indirectness is problematic because it combines features of two other strategies; "Be pessimistic" and "Question, hedge". They (1978:178) include subjunctive forms of modal auxiliaries '*might*', '*would*' and '*could*' to the first strategy, while at the same time they argue that indirect requests have different degrees of politeness. Therefore '*Could you open the door?*' is more polite than '*Can you open the door?*' Paarlahti (1998:71) reports in her study that several studies investigating different requesting strategies include expressions beginning

'*could*' and '*would*' to 'conventional indirectness'. In addition, Pilegaard (1997:231) states that the term 'indirect' is often used to refer to illocutions involving preparatory conditions, such as the receiver's ability or willingness to perform. Thus the receiver is allowed the option of politely refusing by stating that the condition in question, or possibly some other condition, is not fulfilled (Pilegaard 1997:231). I will adopt Pilegaard's view here and argue that in general requests beginning with '*can/could*', '*would*' and '*may/might*' belong to conventional indirectness, although there are some exceptions. The exceptions involve clear cases when the sender offers or promises something for the receiver and uses '*can*'. For instance in the following sentence sender clearly promises that the space of the existing 4th press can from now on be utilized for drying:

9) The benefits of the present proposal are as follows: [list] ...
 -additionally the space of the existing 4th press *can now be utilized for drying* (NNS, Letter VII)

Similarly all occurrences of '*will*' will be labeled as the positive politeness category of offering and promising because in all cases sender is promising something for the receiver.

Additionally giving receiver the option of not doing the act and therefore not coercing receiver produces a subordinate want of not assuming receiver is willing/able to do A. This motivates output strategy of questioning and hedging, which will be explained in the next paragraphs below. Besides these two, not coercing receiver also produces a third strategy which involves sender assuming receiver is not likely to do A, hence making it easy for receiver to opt out which yields output strategy of being pessimistic (Brown and Levinson 1978:177). Being pessimistic was not used in the letters.

Not coercing receiver i.e. giving freedom of action

Three categories belonging to not coercing receiver strategy were found in the letters: questioning and hedging, minimizing the imposition and giving deference for the receiver.

Questioning and hedging: According to Brown and Levinson (1978:150), questioning and hedging derives from the want not to presume and the want not to coerce receiver. Brown and Levinson list several different hedges, for instance: '*sort of*', '*rather*', '*pretty*', '*quite*' and examples like '*I think/suppose/guess Mary is coming*' (1978:150).

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:151-177), there are four hedge groups: hedges on illocutionary force which includes hedges encoded in particles and adverbial-clause hedges; hedges addressed to Grice's Maxims and namely quality, quantity, relevance and manner hedges; hedges addressed to politeness strategies; and lastly prosodic and kinesic hedges. The last group will be excluded from the analysis because the material is written. NNS and NS letters did not have any hedges addressed to politeness strategies. Next I will explain hedges on illocutionary force and hedges addressed to Grice's maxims in detail.

Hedges on illocutionary force are the most important linguistic means of satisfying the speaker's want not to assume hearer is able or willing to do x and also to some extent the want to make minimal assumptions about hearer's wants (Brown and Levinson 1978:151). Brown and Levinson continue (1978:151) that such hedges may be analyzed as adverbs on often deleted performative verbs that represent the illocutionary force of the sentence. Further, Brown and Levinson (1978:151-169) divide these hedges on illocutionary force to hedges encoded in particles and adverbial-clause hedges. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:151-152), some languages have particles which encode hedges in linguistic structure and are among the most commonly used words. Examples of this from English are, for example, tags and expressions like '*I wonder*'. Hedging particles can be divided also into strengtheners or emphatic hedges, like '*exactly*' and '*precisely*', and weakeners which soften or tentativize what they modify (Brown and Levinson 1978:152). There were some examples of strengtheners and weakeners in the letters, as in:

10) We know that bagasse is of *quite* short fibres and paper is *quite* weak. (NNS, Letter III)

11) As stated in our last proposal on May 12, 2000 the estimated shut schedule referred to in *our* specification is *an estimate only* of the manpower required. (NS, Letter XXV)

12) *However*, we are still reviewing the design concept for the new press frames to further reduce the installation time and total related project cost. (NS, Letter XXVIII)

13) In the matter of the fact, it would be *quite* impossible to determine exactly the needed work for this kind of tasks. (NNS, Letter IX)

Most of the cases found in letters were weakeners, like the first three examples above. The fourth example is an example of '*quite*' which is used as a strengthener.

'If' clauses belong to adverbial-clause hedges according to Brown and Levinson (1978:167) and 'if' clauses are a very productive way for hedging the illocutionary force in English. By using if-clauses the sender has a possibility to ask whether receiver (or somebody else) can or will do what is asked for, like in the example below:

14) These two previously issued proposals may be added *if* you so desire such that our complete proposal for the entire line is continued with these two binders. (NS, Letter XXI)

Once again the sender is being very careful and does not want to force receiver to act against her/his will. In fact, most of the hedging in the letters was carried out with 'if' clauses.

Hedges addressed to Grice's Maxims can be roughly divided into quality, quantity, relevance and manner hedges (Brown and Levinson 1978:169). They also argue (*ibid.*) that some of these hedges overlap with the hedges on illocutionary force. Quality hedges were the second most popular way of hedging in the letters. Quite often the sender did not want to take full responsibility for the truth of his utterance and used quality hedge, as in:

15) *Our recommendation is* to move the sizing equipment downstream and relocate 4 dryers from the aftersection to the main section. (NS, Letter XXIV)

In addition, phrases like 'We *believe...*' and 'We *like to...*' were used. Another example of quality hedges is phrase '*as you are aware of*' which is similar to Brown and Levinson's phrases '*as you know*' and '*as is well known*' which are also quality hedges. These phrases disclaim the assumption that the point of speaker's assertion is to inform hearer. Brown and Levinson (1978:170).

One kind of relevance hedge is for example: 16) The price has somewhat increased from the previous quotation *due to scope completion such as* [list] (NNS, Letter IX), where the sender gives reasons for the increased price. Brown and Levinson (1978:175) say that there are clauses which modify performance verb by giving reasons why the speaker made the utterance and so making an implicit claim to being relevant. Other example of relevance hedge is the use of '*because*'.

There were no occurrences of quantity and manner hedges in letters. Quantity hedges notify that not as much or not as precise information as needed is provided to the hearer. Examples of quantity hedges are phrases like: '*more or less*', '*or so*' and '*in short*' (Brown and Levinson 1978:171-172). Manner hedges are hedges which are perspicuous, neither vague nor ambiguous (Brown and Levinson 1978:169).

Minimizing the imposition: According to Brown and Levinson (1978:181), one way of defusing the FTA is to indicate that R_x , the seriousness of the imposition, is not in itself great. When the formula for calculating the weightiness of FTAs is considered, only D (distance) and P (power) are left as possible weighty factors on the FTA. Brown and Levinson give (1978:182) examples and say that expressions minimizing R_x are like: '*just*', '*a little*', '*a bit*', etc. The strategy of minimizing the imposition belongs to the category of 'do not coerce receiver' and therefore it is part of negative politeness.

'*Please*' can be defined in two ways; it can be seen as a conventional politeness marker which is used to minimize the imposition (Brown and Levinson 1978:182) or it can be seen as a sentence-internal insertion (Brown and Levinson, 1978:138, 144). If we consider the following sentence: 17) If you have any questions or need additional information, *please* feel free to contact us. (NNS, Letter I), it seems that the use of '*please*' softens the request in question. Brown and Levinson compare (1978:145) the use of Tamilian '*koncam*' to English '*please*' and say that they make indirect sentences requests. In my opinion, however, the sentence from the NNS letter I is already request without '*please*' in it and therefore '*please*' is used to minimize the imposition.

Giving deference for the receiver: Marsh (in Sajavaara, Marsh and Keto, 1991:104) points out that giving deference must not be perceived as an acknowledgement of inferiority of status (see also Lehtonen 1990). On the other hand, according to Brown and Levinson (1978:177), avoiding coercion of the receiver may take the form of attempting to minimize the threat of coercion by clarifying the sender's view of the power, distance and ranking of the imposition values. Brown and Levinson continue (1978:177-178) that by giving deference the sender claims that the receiver's relative power is great which, in my opinion, is true in this case because the receiver has the power over sender. It is the receiver who decides about further actions or discussions, when they will be and will there be any. According to Pilegaard (1997:226), the power variable changes as a function of business course; when the parties are 'making contact', the receiver decides whether or not to respond to the letter and is hence in power. Pilegaard (1997:226) also emphasizes the difference between letters sent by sellers (sales letters) and letters sent by buyers (inquiries) because a convention only expects a buyer to answer to sales letters. The letters in question are quotations sent by seller so therefore the receiver seems to be in power. Brown and Levinson (1978:191) give examples of ways to indicate deference and one of them is to convey that your (in this case the receiver's) wants are more important

than mine or sender's, as in phrase '*just as you like*'. A commonly used phrase '*at your convenience*' seems to indicate the same meaning, therefore occurrences of the phrase will be counted as negative politeness strategy of giving deference in the analysis.

The phrase '*feel free*' like in sentence: 18) Should you have any questions concerning this proposal please *feel free* to contact me at your earliest convenience. (NS, Letter XXV) appears to be similar to the phrase '*at your convenience*' above because it also seems to give freedom of action to the receiver. However, Brown and Levinson (1978:106) give an example of bald-on-record strategies and say that 'feel free' is similar to 'don't worry about me' or 'don't let me keep you'. For this reason 'feel free' was counted as bald-on-record strategy.

The strategies and categories introduced by Brown and Levinson, and explained above were used in the letter analysis. The total number of negative politeness strategies found in the 20 letters was 396 of which 252 cases (62.5 % of all used strategies in NNS letters) were in NNS letters and 144 cases (62.6 % of all used strategies in NS letters) in NS letters. Now I will move on to presenting the results of negative politeness strategies in both writer groups.

5.3.1 Comparison of non-native and native speakers' letters

Table 4 below shows all the negative politeness strategies used in the NNS and NS letters. The first column lists the used strategies which are first divided into categories (1. Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver, 2. Not coercing the receiver, 3. Being direct and the new category) and next into subcategories in two levels (i.e. 1.1. and 1.1.1.). The total amount of each category, first the number and then the percentage, is shown on the row written in italics. The next two columns show of both the NNS and NS letters how many times the strategy was used and then the

percentage. The last row of Table 4 sums up the total amount of used negative politeness strategies, first of NNS and then NS letters.

Table 4. Negative politeness strategies in the NNS and NS letters

Negative politeness strategies	NNS		NS	
		%		%
1. Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver	0	0	0	0
1.1 Impersonalizing the sender and the receiver	6	2.4	1	0.7
1.1.1 Passives and circumstantial voices	41	16.1	30	20.8
1.1.2 Business 'we'	111	43.5	69	47.9
1.2 Stating the FTA as a general rule	3	1.2	0	0
1.3 Apologizing	0	0	1	0.7
<i>Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver, total</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>63.1</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>70.1</i>
2. Not coercing the receiver	0	0	0	0
2.1 Not assuming the receiver is willing or able to do X	0	0	0	0
2.1.1 Questioning and hedging: hedging, if clauses, hedging opinions, quality hedges and relevance hedges	38	14.9	13	9.0
2.2 Minimizing the imposition	15	5.9	11	7.6
2.3 Give deference	9	3.5	6	4.2
<i>Not coercing the receiver, total</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>24.3</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>20.8</i>
3. Being direct	0	0	0	0
3.1 Being indirect	0	0	0	0
3.1.1 Being conventionally indirect	29	11.4	13	9.0
<i>Being direct, total</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>9.0</i>
New category: giving credentials	3	1.2	1	0.7
<i>Negative politeness, total</i>	255	100	145	100

The total amount of 255 negative politeness strategies were found in the NNS letters, and the letters written by NS had altogether 145 negative politeness strategies. The total of 8 different categories of negative politeness strategies were found in the letters written by the non-native speakers and native speakers. In addition, a new category, giving credentials, was found from the letters. This category will be presented in the end of this chapter. Although the amount of used categories is the same, two of the categories are not the same. Firstly, there were no occurrences of apologizing in the non-native speakers' letters. In contrast, apologizing appeared once in the native speakers' data. Secondly, there were no occurrences of stating the FTA as a general rule in the native speakers'

letters, whereas the non-native data had three cases of stating the FTA as a general rule. These results will be discussed by the strategies in the remaining section of this chapter.

Communicate sender's want not to impinge on the receiver

In both of the writer groups communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver was the most popular strategy. In NNS letters there were the total of 161 cases which means 63.1 % of all the negative politeness strategies, and the corresponding amount in NS letters was 101 cases which means 70.1 %. Three different categories of communicating sender's want not to impinge the receiver were found in the letters: impersonalizing sender and receiver which includes using passives and business 'we', stating the FTA as a general rule and apologizing.

Impersonalizing the sender and the receiver: The first realization of this category was impersonalizing the sender and the receiver and one possible explanation would be an 'empty' noun, so called dummy; '*There are...*', '*It is...*' as in sentence:

19) After paper machine *there is* Rereeler, Off-Machine multinip Calender and Winder. (NNS, Letter VI)

There were 6 cases (2.4%) of impersonalizing the sender and the receiver found in the NNS letters and no occurrences of apologizing. Whereas in NS letters, impersonalizing sender and receiver, and apologizing were both used only once (0.7 % of total). Brown and Levinson's theory describes impersonalization (1978:195-211) and there seems to be some overlapping with categories of impersonal verbs and passives. Therefore I have counted all these kinds of cases as general cases of impersonalizing the sender and the receiver.

Using passives and circumstantial voices: The second most popular category was the same in both writer groups: the use of passives and

circumstantial voices. This category was used 30 times (20.8 %) in NS letters and in NNS letters 41 times (16.1 %). For example, sentence:

20) *Enclosed is* our revised quote letter and Productivity and Quality Co-operation Plan for the press rebuild of PM X, based on the meeting May 28, 1999. (NNS, Letter I)

has the passive '*enclosed is*' instead of '*we have enclosed*' or '*Enclosed is... by us*' form, thus the reference to the sender has been removed. The sentence does not have any reference to the receiver, either. The use of the passive is a very easy way of impersonalizing either the sender or the receiver, for example it can be used if the sender does not want to say who has informed them:

21) *We have also been informed* that our competitor has quoted a totally new reel to enable 2200 mm parent reel size. (NNS, Letter VIII)

Using business 'we': Likewise, the most popular category in both NNS and NS letters was the use of business 'we'. Almost half (47.9 %) of realizations of communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver category were cases of business 'we' in NS letters and in NNS letters 43.5 % of total. One reason for the popularity of business 'we' can be that all forms of 'we' were counted, i.e. '*us*', '*our*' and also the company name when it was used like a subject and it could have been replaced with 'we'. Below are two example sentences of NNS letters where business 'we' and company's name were used:

22) *We* have added options 21 and 22 as discussed. (NNS, Letter I)

23) Keeping these targets in mind *the Company* proposes certain modifications which are shortly listed below and are specified in more detail in the technical specification. (NNS, Letter VII)

Stating the FTA as a general rule: This was the second category of communicating sender's want not to impinge receiver found in the letters. This category was the least popular of all negative politeness strategies; only 3 cases (1.2 % of total) were found in the NNS letters and none in the NS letters. All the cases were in Letter X and here is one of them:

24) The trend in new coater layouts in the world is focusing on complete on-line processes. (NNS, Letter X)

Apologizing: Only one instance of apologizing was found in the NS letters:

25) We *apologize* for the delay in submitting this quotation but trust you find it meets your needs at this stage of the project. (NS, Letter XXI/III)

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:192) apologizing can be done in many ways. One way is to beg for forgiveness, and of which the sentence above is like a textbook example. The sender has used more formal way of apologizing which also should be used in the letters, as discussed earlier. First the sender apologizes for the delay and then tries to compensate the situation by stating that the quotation should meet the receiver's needs.

Not coercing the receiver

Not coercing the receiver was the second most popular negative strategy used in the letters written both by NNS and NS (62 occurrences 24.3 % of total used negative strategies in the NNS letters, and 30 occurrences which makes 20.8 % of total in the NS letters). Three categories of not coercing the receiver strategy were found in the NNS and NS letters: questioning and hedging, minimizing the imposition and giving deference.

Questioning and hedging: The category of questioning and hedging was the most popular in both writer groups: 13 cases; 9.0 % of total in NS letters and 38 (14.9 %) in NNS letters. Questioning and hedging were used in a varied way in the letters, as can be seen from examples below:

26) We have included coating colour preparation and automation as a part of the quotation as *we think that* in this kind of project all the parts of system must function well together. (NNS, Letter X)

27) In the matter of the fact, it would be *quite* impossible to determine exactly the needed work for this kind of tasks. (NNS, Letter IX)

28) Additional storage places can be added to the line or these can be located beside the machine line *if* needed. (NNS, Letter VI)

29) The main benefits of a top wire unit are, *as you are aware of*, higher dewatering capacity in the wire section, formation improvement and more even fines and filler distribution across the paper sheet. (NNS, Letter II)

The first sentence is an example of hedging opinions which was found in the several NNS letters; sender says '*we think that*' instead of directly telling his opinion. The second sentence is an example of very usual hedge '*quite*' which is used here as a strengthener. Brown and Levinson (1978:152) define strengtheners acting as emphatic hedges, e.g. '*precisely*'. The third sentence is an example of if-clauses which are according to Brown and Levinson (1978:167) a very productive source of hedging in English. The fourth sentence has an example of hedges addressed to Grice's maxims (Brown and Levinson 1978:169), '*as you are aware of*', and more particularly of a quality hedge which disclaims the assumption that the point of sender's assertion is to inform receiver, as Brown and Levinson put it (1978:170).

Minimizing the imposition: The category of minimizing the imposition was found in the NNS letters 15 times, i.e. 5.9 % and in the NS letters 11 cases, 7.6 % of total negative politeness strategies. All of the occurrences of minimizing the imposition were uses of conventional politeness marker '*please*', as in sentence from Letter II:

30) *Please* also find enclosed a brochure describing one of our references in Finland. (NNS, Letter II)

Giving deference: This was the least popular way of not coercing the receiver both in NNS and NS letters. Only 9 cases were found in the NNS letters which means only 3.5 % of total negative politeness strategies and 6 occurrences (i.e. 4.2 %) of giving deference category was found in the NS letters. Most of the cases were occurrences of phrase '*at your convenience*' which shows deference to the receiver. In the example below the sender lets the receiver decide whether further discussions will be held and if they will be, suggests that they can be held whenever it is most convenient for the receiver:

31) We hope this is of interest to you and we look forward to further discussions *at your convenience*. (NNS, Letter V)

An interesting curiosity was found in one of the non-native speakers' letters, as shown in the two examples below:

32) Enclosed please find the Company's technical specification No. XXX999999.9.X for the budget quotation No. XXX999999.9.X for Your Paper Machine No. X Rebuild.

33) According to Your request the Company has quoted X calender with two nips. (NNS, Letter VII)

As can be seen from the examples, the sender has written the pronoun *you* with a capital y. Paarlahti (1998:65) argues that this is a common feature in Finnish business letters used to emphasize the power distance between the participants. I do not know how common this feature is, anyhow it seems to give deference for the receiver and complements the power of the receiver.

Being direct

Being conventionally indirect: The third and the last negative politeness strategy found in the letters is being conventionally indirect. There were 29 cases (11.4 % of total negative strategies used) of being conventionally indirect in the NNS letters. In contrast, conventional indirectness was used 13 times in the NS letters which means 9.0 % of total negative politeness strategies.

The most usual way of being conventionally indirect in the NNS letters was the use of modal auxiliaries (*could*, *would*) when asking the willingness of the receiver, as in:

34) An other [sic] matter which we *would like to point out* is that the prices are estimated without taking into account the local manufacturing in China. (NNS, Letter VI)

However, the native speakers preferred '*would*', '*should*' and '*may/might*' in their letters and '*could*' was not used at all. In contrast, the non-native

speakers used five different modal auxiliaries in their letters ('can', 'would', 'could', 'may/might' and 'should'). Example of a sentence 'may':

35) These two previously issued proposals *may* be added if you so desire such that our complete proposal for the entire line is continued with these two binders. (NS, Letter XXI)

In this sentence, the sender uses besides 'may' also '*if you so desire*' which gives more freedom for the receiver and thus increases the politeness.

Example of sentences where 'can' was used for promising:

36) If X accepts than [sic] XX roll for the X project can be delayed and would be ready for shipment February 4, 2000 instead of Jan 14, 2000 as stated in the contract and without any delivery penalty to the Company *we can give additional X USD discount for our final price.* (NNS, Letter I)

The sender offers an additional discount for the receiver, the amount of money is left out for the confidentiality reasons. This kind of sentences were included in the positive politeness category of offering and promising.

New category: giving credentials: There were recurrent instances in the data of a particular kind of phrase which seemed to be a politeness strategy.

All the phrases are below:

57) We will send you contact *names and numbers at mills that have the same or similar Company equipment.* (NS, Letter XXVI)

58) Please also find enclosed a brochure describing one of *our references* in Finland. (NNS, Letter III)

59) I have enclosed a list of *latest paper machine references in Asia area.* (NNS, Letter III)

60) *There are in our quotation stock several other customer who are planning to short their process lay-out by combining coating and calendering into the same line.* (NNS, Letter X)

The four phrases above have something in common, they all seem to give references of other customers who are using for example the same equipment or paper machine. There did not seem to be category for it in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. However, I found from Louhiala-Salminen's (1997) analysis of faxes and rhetorical moves in them a possible explanation for the phrases. Louhiala-Salminen (1997:324) calls a similar

kind of move as ‘Establishing credentials’, however she does not describe the move except for the fact that the move is used usually in the ‘first contact’ faxes. Nevertheless, the name of the move is a definition itself and the sentences seem to have the same function; they seem to give credentials. This way the receiver would regard the sender’s company more trustworthy because the references are probably well-known on this particular field of industry. This category may be seen to belong to the negative politeness strategy because the phrases are quite subtle and formal. The frequency of this category was small in both corpora, the native writers’ corpus had 1 occurrence, whereas the non-native writers’ corpus had 3 occurrences.

Next I will move on to presenting positive politeness strategies used in the letters.

5.4 Positive politeness strategies used in the letters

A total of five different categories of positive politeness strategies were found in the letters. The categories were: noticing, attending to receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc., presupposing, raising or asserting common ground, offering and promising, being optimistic and including both sender and receiver in the activity. These categories belong into two strategies of positive politeness; claiming the common ground and conveying that sender and receiver are co-operators. First the strategies and categories will be presented below and then their amounts will be discussed in the NNS letters and in the NS letters. Table 5 below shows the found categories and strategies.

Table 5. Positive politeness strategies used in the letters

Claiming common ground
Noticing, attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc.
Presupposing, raising or asserting common ground
Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators
Offering and promising
Being optimistic
Including both sender and receiver in the activity

Claiming the common ground

Two different categories of this strategy were found in the letters: noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc., and presupposing, raising or asserting common ground. In this strategy the sender claims 'common ground' with the receiver, by indicating that they both belong to some set of persons who share specific wants, including goals and values. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:108), there are three ways of making this claim: firstly, the sender may convey that some want (e.g. goal, or desired object) of the receiver's is admirable or interesting to the sender too. Secondly, the sender may stress common membership in a group or category and this way emphasize that both the receiver and the sender belong to a set of persons who share some wants. Or, finally, the sender can claim common perspective with the receiver without necessarily referring to in-group membership (Brown and Levinson 1978:108). These result in a number of sub-categories of which those that were found in the letters will be presented below.

Noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc.:

Brown and Levinson argue (1978:108) that noticing, attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc., suggests that the sender should take notice of aspects of the receiver's condition which can include for example noticeable changes, remarkable possessions, etc. This means anything, that looks as though the receiver would want the sender to notice and approve of, Brown and Levinson (1978:108) conclude. In addition, noticing means that when the receiver makes an FTA against her/himself, (any *faux pas*) the sender should 'notice' it and indicate that it does not embarrass her/him (Brown and Levinson 1978:109). On the other hand, if negative politeness is used, the sender should always ignore the receiver's *faux pas* (Brown and Levinson 1978:109). According to Pilegaard (1997:229), different forms of thanking the receiver (*thank you for + -ing/noun*), conveying pleasure of attending to the receiver's wants (*I/we are pleased/glad/have pleasure to...*)

and combinations of these also belong to this category. The sentence below, for instance, includes two different ways of achieving this category:

37) *As requested* during our last meeting on June 7, 2000, *we are pleased* to enclose our quotation No. XXXX999999.99 covering a rebuild of your No. X Paper Machine.

First, the phrase '*as requested*' fulfills the receiver's need of sending the quotation, and, second, '*we are pleased*' conveys the pleasure of attending to the receiver's wants.

Presupposing, raising or asserting common ground: According to Brown and Levinson (1978:122), presupposing, raising or asserting common ground with the receiver can be done in many ways. The sender can presuppose knowledge of the receiver's wants and attitudes, or that the receiver's values are the same as the sender's, or a familiarity can be presupposed in the sender-receiver relationship, or the sender can presuppose the receiver's knowledge (Brown and Levinson 1978:127-129). This category was found in the letters, the following are two examples of it:

38) Please note that during recent years the speeds of paper machines have increased *dramatically*. (NNS, Letter III)

39) *Fortunately* a machine analysis has been performed for your PM X in spring 1996 (report Machine Analysis number 999999). (NNS, Letter IX)

It seems risky to characterize one's opinions with words like '*dramatically*' or '*fortunately*', etc., if the sender is uncertain of the receiver's opinion on the topic. Or, it could be that the sender thought that the things with which s/he was using these words are some kind of 'common truths' or generally known facts. Brown and Levinson note (1978:128) that the preference for extremes on value scales that is a feature of positive politeness derives part of its impact from the tacit claim that the sender and the receiver have the same values with respect to the relevant predicate. In other words, the sender and the receiver have the same definition of what the scale is, and what, for example, constitutes beauty or an effective paper machine.

Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators

The second major category of positive politeness strategies, conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators, derives from the want to convey that the speaker and the addressee are co-operatively involved in the relevant activity (Brown and Levinson 1978:130). Brown and Levinson (ibid.) continue, that if the sender and the receiver are co-operating, they share goals in some domain, and thus want to convey that they are co-operators can serve to redress the receiver's positive face want. The co-operation may be carried out by offering or promising, being optimistic or including both the sender and the receiver in the activity, for instance (Brown and Levinson 1978:130-133).

Offering and promising: If we consider the following sentence: 40) This discount *will not have* any effect for remaining option prices. (NNS, Letter I), it seems that the sender makes a promise to the receiver that the discount will not have any effect for remaining option prices. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:130), there is a politeness strategy of offering and promising which belongs to the positive politeness. Brown and Levinson (ibid.) argue that the sender may choose to stress her/his co-operation with the receiver in another way when trying to redress the potential threat of some FTAs. The sender may claim that (within certain sphere of relevance) whatever the receiver wants, the sender wants for her/him and will help to obtain (Brown and Levinson 1978:130). Brown and Levinson (1978:130) continue that offers and promises are the natural outcome of choosing this strategy; even if they are false, they demonstrate the sender's good intentions in satisfying the receiver's positive-face wants. The category of offering and promising and ambiguity related to it will be presented in more detail in the following chapter.

Being optimistic: According to Brown and Levinson (1978:131), the other side of the coin, the point-of-view flip that is associated with the co-operative strategy, is for the sender to assume that the receiver wants the sender's wants for the sender (or for the sender and the receiver) and will

help her/him to obtain them. That is, for the sender to be so presumptuous as to assume the receiver will co-operate with her/him may carry a tacit commitment for the sender to co-operate with the receiver as well, or at least a tacit claim that the receiver will co-operate with the sender because it will be in their mutual shared interest. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:131), presumptuous or 'optimistic' expressions of FTAs are one outcome of this strategy and they constitute perhaps the most dramatic difference between positive-politeness and negative-politeness ways of doing FTAs. These optimistic expressions of FTAs seem to work by minimizing the size of the face threat as it would be nothing to ask (or offer, etc.), for example the asked favour is considered as such a small one, not causing any difficulties to accomplish. Or that the co-operation between the sender and the receiver means that such small things can be taken for granted (Brown and Levinson 1978:131).

For instance, in sentence: 41) *We look forward to further discussions* at your convenience. (NS, Letter XXVIII), the sender seems to be optimistically presuming that there will be further discussions. According to Pilegaard (1997:239), this way the sender expresses optimism about a future business relationship and/or presuppose the potential buyer's positive reaction to the quotation. Pilegaard (1997:240) classifies also expressions like '*We hope/trust these details are of interest to you*' into the same category.

Including both the speaker (sender) and the hearer (receiver) in the activity: This is the last positive politeness strategy which will be discussed here. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:132), by using an inclusive 'we' form, when the sender really means 'you' or 'me', s/he can call upon the co-operative assumptions and thereby redress FTAs. This way the sender can imply 'I will do it for our benefit' thus stressing the co-operativeness of the sender's action. For example, in sentences below, the sender first refers to a telephone conversation he has had with the receiver; hence '*our*

telephone conversation’, and, second, the sender mentions meeting where both the sender and the receiver have been; thus ‘*our* last meeting’.

42) With respect to *our* telephone conversation today, please find our updated quotation No. XXX9XX9999 for a new headbox for PM X. (NS, Letter XXVII)

43) As requested during *our* last meeting on June 7, 2000, we are pleased to enclose our quotation No. XXXX99999.99 covering a rebuild of your No. X Paper Machine. (NS, Letter XXV)

Next I will present the results and compare them between the speaker groups.

5.4.1 Comparison of non-native and native speakers’ letters

Table 6 below presents all the positive politeness strategies found in the NNS and NS letters. The first column lists the used strategies which are first divided into categories (1. and 2.) and next into subcategories (i.e. 1.1.). The total amount of each category, first the number and then the percentage, is shown on the row written in italics. The next two columns show of both the NNS and NS letters how many times the strategy was used and then the percentage. The last row of Table 6 sums up the total amount of used positive politeness strategies, first of NNS and then NS letters.

Table 6. Positive politeness strategies in the NNS and NS letters

Positive politeness strategies	NNS		NS	
		%		%
1. Claiming common ground	0	0	0	0
1.1 Noticing, attending to the receiver’s interests, wants, needs, etc.	23	17.2	12	16.0
1.2 Presupposing, raising or asserting common ground	4	3.0	0	0
<i>Claiming common ground, total</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>16.0</i>
2. Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators	0	0	0	0
2.1 Offering and promising	91	67.9	63	54.7
2.2 Being optimistic	16	11.9	41	18.7
2.3 Including both sender and receiver in the activity	0	0	8	10.7
<i>Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators, total</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>79.9</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>84.0</i>
<i>Positive politeness, total</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>100</i>

As can be seen from the table, 134 positive politeness strategies were identified in the NNS letters, and letters written by NS had altogether 75 positive politeness strategies. The total of four different categories of positive politeness were found both in the NNS and the NS letters. Again, the amount of categories is the same in both speaker groups but the used categories are different. The NNS letters included a category of presupposing, raising or asserting common ground which did not occur in the NS letters. In contrast, the NS letters had a category of including both the sender and the receiver in the activity which did not occur in the NNS letters. The results will be discussed by the strategies in the remaining section of this chapter.

Claiming common ground

20.1 % (27 cases) of positive politeness used in the NNS letters and 16.0 % (12 cases) in the NS letters were occurrences of claiming the common ground strategy. This strategy included two categories found in the letters: noticing, attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc. and presupposing, raising or asserting common ground.

Noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc.: The most popular category among this strategy was noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc. It occurred 23 times in the NNS letters which means 17.2 % of all used positive politeness strategies. On the other hand, all occurrences of claiming common ground strategy in the NS letters belonged to this category, the total was 16.0 % (12 cases). The usual way of carrying out noticing, attending to receiver's interests, etc. category was to do something as was agreed with the receiver, like the following examples show:

44) We have revised the scope *based on the discussions with you* on October 25-26, 1999. (NNS, Letter IV)

45) We ask you to notice that the equipment for the stock blending area are not included in our Quotation now but can be included afterwards depending *on your request*. (NNS, Letter VI)

46) *For helping you in preparing the quotation for the rest of the delivery we will also send some information and our recommendation for your help: [list] (NNS, Letter VII)*

47) *We have followed your enquiry quite precisely. (NNS, Letter X)*

Another way of realizing this category was to thank the receiver or convey that some of the receiver's wants are also of sender's interest, as in the examples below:

48) We hope that our budgetary quotation meets your requirements at this stage and *we are happy to* discuss it in more detail at your convenience. (NNS, Letter VII)

49) *We appreciate very much of your interest to the Company technology and the opportunity you have given us to show our view, how a modern LWC line will be designed. (NNS, Letter VI)*

50) *Thank you for your enquiry (dated 98. 12. 17) for the Customer PM X. (NNS, Letter X)*

Presupposing, raising or asserting common ground: Presupposing, raising or asserting common ground was not used in the NS letters at all. However, the category was used in the NNS letters 4 times (3.0 % of the total positive politeness strategies) and it was carried out by presupposing that the receiver's values (or opinions, etc.) are the same as the sender's values. Intensifying modifiers are used for this purpose, as in:

51) Please note that during recent years the speeds of paper machines have increased *dramatically*. (NNS, Letter III)

The sentence above seems to presume that the receiver will also think that the speeds of paper machines have increased dramatically.

Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators

This strategy was the most popular in both writer groups. The NNS letters had altogether 107 cases (79.9 % of total positive politeness strategies) of conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators. The NS letters had the total of 63 occurrences of this strategy which means 84.0 % of the total used positive politeness strategies. Two different categories of this strategy were identified among the NNS letters: offering and promising

(67.9 % of total), and being optimistic (11.9 % of total). On the other hand, there were three different categories found in the NS letters. More than half of the cases among this strategy belonged to the category of offering and promising (41 cases; 54.7 %), 18.7 % (14 cases) of the occurrences belonged to the category of being optimistic and the last category, including both the sender and the receiver, was 10.7 % (8 cases) of the total used positive politeness strategies.

Offering and promising: The category of offering and promising was sometimes a difficult one to recognize partly because my lack of knowledge on the particular field of industry. It was difficult to recognize whether the sender was simply stating a commonly known fact or offering and/or promising something for the receiver. However, the letters are quotation letters and the aim of the sender is to sell, hence it may be concluded that everything mentioned in the letters is done for some purpose. Or at least it can be said that everything mentioned in the letters is carefully pondered over and chosen for, or otherwise the sender does not want or does not care to fulfil his (all the senders were male) task which is against all the laws of business. While at the same time carefully taking the context of these ambiguous sentences into consideration I was able to put the sentences into the right categories. Below there are two examples, one from a NS letter and one from a NNS letter:

52) *We have calculated the instantaneous production rate to be 820 TPD for both grades with this layout. (NS, Letter XXIV)*

53) *X is a new multinip calender concept with polymer-covered soft rolls and heated intermediate rolls with a new stack loading principle. (NNS; Letter X)*

In the first sentence, the sender promises the receiver that the instantaneous production rate is 820 TPD for both grades with the layout in question. In the second sentence, the sender seems to offer to the receiver this new multinip calender concept with polymer-covered soft rolls and promises that it has heated intermediate rolls with a new stack loading principle.

Another example which is less ambiguous because of a phrase '*with very high efficiency*', in other words the sender promises to/for the receiver that the option has very high efficiency:

54) One option being a new high speed coater splicing unwind and a second option to rebuild the existing unit an option that would *allow you to consider two phases approach to reach the desired 4800 FPM with very high efficiency.* (NS, Letter XXVI)

Here is an example from a NNS letter:

55) *The benefits of the present proposal are as follows: (list)... -additionally the space of the existing 4th press can now be utilized for drying* (NNS, Letter VII)

Although the sentence above has a phrase '*can now be utilized*' it does not belong to the category of being conventionally indirect. Instead, it belongs to the category of offering and promising because the sentence begins with the phrase '*The benefits...are as follows:*' which is followed by a list of benefits.

Sometimes it was difficult to see whether the mentioned topic was positive or negative or perhaps neutral. Considering the justification mentioned above that if something is mentioned it can be regarded as positive thing when keeping in mind the purpose of selling. It would not make sense to mention negative things for the possible future customer or business partner. Therefore in such cases, the right category is offering and promising.

Finally, here is an example of offering and/or promising with the verb '*will*'. In this extract the sender promises to take full responsibility:

56) 1. *We will take* full responsibility for the equipment condition. (NS, Letter IXX)

However, it must be noted that it is impossible to analyse everything from the pragmatic viewpoint. Not every sentence from the letters falls into

a category and even one new category was found. This new category was presented in the previous chapter 5.3.1.

Being optimistic: The last category of this strategy, being optimistic, was used 16 times in the NNS letters and the percentage of this category among all the positive politeness strategies is 11.9 %. The NS letters had altogether 14 cases of being optimistic, which means 18.7 % of all the positive politeness strategies used. The following are examples of being optimistic:

- 61) *We look forward to our next meetings on August 11 and August 18 to discuss our quotation in detail.* (NS, Letter XX)
 62) *We sincerely trust that this quotation is satisfactory and suits your requirements.* (NS, Letter XXII)

The first of the examples above expresses optimism about that there will be new meetings in the future. Most of the instances found in the letters were similar using the phrase '*We/I look forward to...*'. The second example expresses optimism about that the quotation they are sending is appropriate and fulfils sender's expectations.

Including both the sender and the receiver in the activity: Including both the sender and the receiver in the activity category had 8 occurrences (10.7 % of total positive politeness strategies) in the NS letters. The sender was often referring to the common meeting or discussion the sender and the receiver already had had or were going to have soon, as in the examples below:

- 63) *We look forward to our discussion on February 17.* (NS, Letter IXX)
 64) *Enclosed is our revised specification for a firm price quotation for the press rebuild of PM X based on our meeting April 8, 1999.* (NS, Letter XXVIII)

5.5 Bald-on-record strategies used in the letters

The bald-on-record strategy was the most infrequent of all the used strategies in both writer groups; in the NNS letters only 4.2 % of all the used

strategies were bald-on-record and 4.8 % in the NS letters. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:74), an act is performed baldly or without redress when it is done in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible. Bald-on-record strategies found in the letters can be divided into imperatives and performatives.

Imperatives

Direct imperatives are clear examples of bald-on-record usage, Brown and Levinson (1978:100) argue. Greenbaum and Quirk (1993:231) say that there are four major sentence types: declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and exclamatives. Negative imperatives take verb '*do not*' and a positive imperative can be made more persuasive or insistent (especially in British English) by adding *do* before the verb as in: '*Do have some more tea*' (Greenbaum and Quirk 1993:243). Imperatives are often softened with conventional politeness marker '*please*' or emphasized by hedges, Brown and Levinson (1978:106) conclude.

Performatives

Besides imperatives, performative verb forms are regarded in the most direct category of strategies (Paarlahti 1998:70). Performative verb forms can be defined as verbs which refer to the speech acts performed by uttering the sentence, as Greenbaum and Quirk (1993:49) put it. Thomas (1995:37) says that 'traditional' performatives in English are: '*sentence*', '*absolve*', '*baptize*' and '*name*'. One way to recognize performative verbs is try word '*hereby*' before the verb in order to indicate that the utterance in which it occurs is the vehicle of the performance of the act in question. Next I will present bald-on-record strategies found in the NNS letters and NS letters.

5.5.1 Comparison of non-native and native speakers' letters

There were 30 bald-on-record strategies in 20 letters which makes this strategy the most unpopular compared with negative and positive politeness strategies. The NNS letters had altogether 17 bald-on-record strategies,

which means percentage of 4.2 % when compared to other used strategies. Similarly the NS letters had altogether 11 bald-on-record strategies, which means percentage of 4.8 % when compared to other used strategies. The percentages are rather similar in the both speaker groups.

Table 7. Bald-on-record strategies of NNS and NS letters

	NNS letters	NS letters
<i>Bald-on-record</i>	17	11
<i>Bald-on-record of all strategies, %</i>	4.2	4.8

Most of the bald-on-record acts occurred in the NNS and NS letters had the conventional politeness marker '*please*' to soften the imperative like in the example below:

65) I hope our proposal helps you in the finalizing the investment proposal and *please do not hesitate* to contact us for any further information. (NNS, Letter IX)

In addition, both NNS and NS letters had sentences where a positive imperative was used:

66) The concept is challenging but *we do believe* that combining Company's know how in delivering equipment and whole processes and the Customer's know how in paper making will lead a success story. (NNS, Letter X)

67) *We do appreciate* the opportunity to submit our proposal for your consideration and look forward to meeting with you and your group on January 21, 1999. (NS, Letter XXVI)

In the first example the sender expresses his belief and emphasizes it with '*do*'. The second example is similar, '*do*' is used to emphasize the appreciation of the sender.

An example of bald-on-record strategy and performative verb form:

68) We *ask* you to notice that the equipment for the stock blending area are not included in our Quotation now but can be included afterwards depending on your request. (NNS, Letter VI)

In the sentence above the sender gives freedom of action to the receiver twice; firstly by being conventionally indirect when he says that the equipment for the stock blending area can be included and secondly by saying '*depending on your request*' i.e. sender notices receiver's interests. The verb '*ask*' is a basic performative verb used for realizing the bald-on-record strategy and you can add '*hereby*' in front of it.

Only one case was found in the NS letters where an act was performed baldly just with a simple imperative and without '*please*' as a softener:

69) *Note* that new felt rolls are recommended for the bottom felt pockets due to the higher felt tension. (NS, Letter XXIV)

In this sentence the sender seems to take care of the receiver's best concerns and gives only a recommendation and a reason for doing it.

6 DISCUSSION

The results of the present study show that there are surprisingly small differences in the use and production of politeness strategies between the non-native and native speakers' letters. This finding may be unexpected because previous studies show that there are differences in business writing of non-native and native speakers. However, it must be kept in mind that generalizations cannot be made because of the limited amount of data.

In this chapter I will firstly discuss the length and structure of the letters and then move on to the comparison of the results.

6.1 Length and structure

The non-native speakers' letters are in average longer than the native speakers' letters; the average length is for the NNS letters 1.7 pages and 1.15 pages for the NS letters. Also Sims and Guice (1992) noticed in their study that the letters written by the non-natives were significantly longer than the NS letters. In the present study the NNS give a summary of the technical specification which accompanies the quotation letter and is often hundreds of pages long. This can be seen as politeness or being considerate towards the receiver; receiver gets some kind of idea what does the specification include already from the quotation letter.

On the other hand, a shorter letter can be seen better because the message is transmitted more efficiently. Business letters should be kept as short as possible and one A4 is one recommendation (see e.g. Eustace, 1996:53). It has even been said that if the thing cannot be said on one page then it is not worth to be said at all. Also many business correspondence textbooks emphasize clear and concise expression which means shortness and therefore effectiveness of letters (see Moon 1999, Ashley 1993). However, the amount of information in today's world is growing rapidly; managers and

executives receive daily even hundreds of e-mail messages not to mention letters. Today's hectic business world is demanding and there is no time for waiting and if the message is not clearly stated it may be discarded.

Nevertheless, there is a danger of being too short and giving too little information for the receiver. For example, in Ashley's view (1993:13) the length depends on the subject of the letter and: "The right length includes the right amount of information." (Ashley, *ibid.*) This advice is quite helpful; the length should be adjusted according to the message. It may be concluded that the length of the message is an important matter which should be considered carefully. In addition, the style of the message, politeness among other things, can also put the reader back.

6.2 Comparison of negative politeness strategies

The NNS letters had altogether 255 negative politeness strategies and NS letters had 145. When compared with the total amount of politeness strategies, 62.8 % of strategies in the NNS letters and 62.6 % of strategies in the NS letters were negative politeness strategies. This result is not surprising because negative politeness is the strategy used between acquaintances and it is more formal way of being polite than positive politeness. Next I will have a look are there differences in the strategies and categories different writer groups were using.

Table 8. Percentages of negative politeness in letters

<i>Negative politeness in letters</i>	NNS letters		NS letters	
1. Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver	0	0	0	0
1.1 Impersonalizing the sender and the receiver	2.4	1.5	0.7	0.4
1.1.1 Passives and circumstantial voices	16.1	10.1	20.8	13
1.1.2 Business 'we'	43.5	27.3	47.9	30
1.2 Stating the FTA as a general rule	1.2	0.7	0	0
1.3 Apologizing	0	0	0.7	0.3
<i>Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver, total</i>	<i>63.1</i>	<i>39.7</i>	<i>70.1</i>	<i>43.9</i>

Table cont.

Table cont.

2. Not coercing the receiver	0	0	0	0
2.1 Not assuming the receiver is willing or able to do X	0	0	0	0
2.1.1 Questioning and hedging: hedging, if clauses, hedging opinions, quality hedges and relevance hedges	14.9	9.4	9	5.7
2.2 Minimizing the imposition	5.9	3.7	7.6	4.8
2.3 Give deference	3.5	2.2	4.2	2.6
<i>Not coercing the receiver, total</i>	<i>24.3</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>20.8</i>	<i>13</i>
3. Being direct	0	0	0	0
3.1 Being indirect	0	0	0	0
3.1.1 Being conventionally indirect	11.4	7.1	9	5.7
<i>Being direct, total</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>7.1</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>5.7</i>
New category: giving credentials	1.2	0.7	0.7	0.4
Negative politeness, total	100	62.8	100	62.6

Table 8 above presents all the strategies and categories of negative politeness used both in the NNS letters and NS letters. The categories are shown on the first column on the left. The total amount of each category is shown on the row written in italics. The columns on the right-hand side give percentages of the NNS and NS letters, first among the negative politeness strategies and then compared with the total amount of strategies used in the letters.

The findings show that there was one difference in the used categories. The NNS letters did not have any occurrences of apologizing category and the NS letters did not have any occurrences of stating the FTA as a general rule. However, the percentages for both of these differing categories were small; apologizing 0.7 % (only 0.3 % of the all used strategies) and stating the FTA as a general rule 1.2 % which means 0.7 % of the all used politeness strategies. Therefore this difference cannot be considered as a significant one. Both apologizing and stating the FTA as a general rule are general negative politeness strategies used in the business letters.

Communicating sender's want not to impinge on the receiver is the most popular negative politeness strategy for both groups. The percentages of this strategy were rather similar in both writer groups; among the non-native speakers' letters 63.1 % and 39.7 % when compared with all the strategies

used in the NNS letters and in the NS' letters the percentages were 70.1 % and 43.9 %. Otherwise the number of categories among this strategy were also quite similar in both groups, the category of business 'we' occurred the most frequent in both writer groups: NNS 43.5 % (27.3 % of total used strategies) and NS 47.9 % (30 % of total). It was noted earlier that the large volume of business 'we' may be due to a computational factor. However, business 'we' is a general convention in the business letters, noted as such also by Brown and Levinson (1978:207).

The second most popular category for the both writer groups was the use of passives and circumstantial voices, the percentages are NNS 16.1 % (10.1 % of total) and NS 20.8 % (13 % of total). The use of passives is a common way of removing reference from the sender or of making unclear who is the actual subject behind the action or who should perform the action. Textbooks of commercial correspondence recommend the use of passive and, for example Yli-Jokipii (1996) found in her study that the passive orientation is frequent in negative power situations.

Not coercing the receiver strategy was the second most popular negative politeness strategy for both groups; 24.3 % in the NNS letters (15.3 % of total) and 20.8 % in the NS letters (13.0 % of total). Among this strategy questioning and hedging was the most popular in both groups; 14.9 % in the NNS letters (9.4 % of total) and 9.0 % in the NS letters (5.7 % of total). Questioning and hedging was slightly more popular among the non-native speakers. The most popular way of hedging for both writer groups was using an *if*-clause. Also both speaker groups favoured the use of '*however*'. In addition, the NNS letters used frequently '*we think*' phrase for hedging the opinion or suggestions and '*quite*' as a softener. One reason for the frequent use of hedging could be that it is an effective way to soften the message and it can be realized in various linguistic forms.

Next category is minimizing the imposition; percentages are 5.9 % among the NNS (3.7 % of total) and 7.6 % among the NS letters (4.8 % of total). The realization of minimizing the imposition was carried out in both writer groups similarly with the conventional politeness marker '*please*'. And lastly, category of giving deference with percentages of 3.5 % (2.2 % of total) in the NNS letters and 4.2 % (2.6 % of total) in the NS letters. The act of giving deference was carried out in the both speaker groups with the phrase '*at your convenience*' in the closings. In addition, in one of the NNS letters the pronoun '*you*' was capitalized twice which is calculated as giving deference.

The category of being conventionally indirect which was the only category of being direct strategy had the percentages of 11.4 % (7.1 % of total) in the NNS letters and in the NS letters 9.0 % (5.7 % of the total number of politeness strategies). In the NS letters being conventionally indirect was as popular as the category of questioning and hedging, the percentage for both categories is 9.0 % of the used negative politeness strategies which means 5.7 % of the total used politeness strategies. Being conventionally indirect is also quite a versatile category in English, the writer can, for example, choose from '*may*', '*can*', '*could*' and '*would*'. The realization of being conventionally indirect varied more in the NNS letters; they used '*can be*', '*would*', '*could*', '*may/might*', and '*should*' structures of which '*would*' was used most frequently and '*may/might*' the least. By contrast, the native speakers used only '*would*', '*should*' and '*may/might*', of which '*would*' and '*should*' were used equivalently. The absence of '*could*' from the native data seems somewhat unexpected result,

It can be concluded that there was only little variation among the number of negative politeness strategies used in the both writer groups. The only variation occurred among the strategy of communicating the sender's want not to impinge on the receiver where one category which was used in the non-native speakers' letters did not occur in the native data and vice versa.

These categories were stating the FTA as a general rule, which was used by the NNS, and apologizing, which was used by the NS. However, as mentioned above, the occurrence of these categories in the data was infrequent, therefore any generalizations cannot be made. Nevertheless, there was some variation among the strategies, for example with the selection of modal auxiliary in the category of being conventionally indirect. The non-native speakers prefer several verb forms in their letters whereas the native speakers rely on less. This may be due to the non-natives' worse knowledge of English, they do not know which verb form they should use, therefore they use several.

6.3 Comparison of positive strategies

The NNS letters had altogether 134 positive politeness strategies and the NS letters had 75. This means that 33.0 % of the total amount of used politeness strategies in the NNS letters were positive politeness and in the NS letters the percentage is slightly lower, 32.5 %. This result is not surprising for the present data of business letters, because positive politeness strategies are regarded as informal and they are usual among friends and not business associates.

Table 9. Percentages of positive politeness in letters

<i>Positive politeness in letters</i>	NNS		NS	
1. Claiming the common ground	0	0	0	0
1.1 Noticing, attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc.	17.2	5.7	16	5.2
1.2 Presupposing, raising or asserting common ground	3	1.0	0	0
<i>Claiming the common ground, total</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>5.2</i>
2. Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators	0	0	0	0
2.1 Offering and promising	67.9	22.4	54.7	17.7
2.2 Being optimistic	11.9	3.9	18.7	6.1
2.3 Including both the sender and the receiver in the activity	0	0	10.7	3.5
<i>Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators, total</i>	<i>79.9</i>	<i>26.4</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>27.3</i>
Positive politeness, total	100	33.0	100	32.5

Table 9 presents all the strategies and categories of positive politeness used both in the NNS letters and the NS letters. The columns on the right-hand side give percentages of the NNS and the NS letters, first among the positive politeness strategies and then compared with the total amount of strategies used in the letters.

Conveying that the sender and the receiver are co-operators was the most popular strategy for both writer groups resulting in 79.9 % of all the used positive politeness strategies in the NNS letters and 84.0 % in the NS letters. When this strategy is compared to the total amount of all the strategies found in the letters, the percentages are for the NNS letters 26.4 % and the NS letters 27.3 %. There was a slight variation among this strategy between the writer groups: category of including both the sender and the receiver in the activity which did not occur at all in the NNS letters. In contrast, occurrence of this category in the NS letters was quite infrequent, it was the least popular of the all used positive strategies (10.7 %) and 3.5 % when compared to all used politeness strategies. However, including both the sender and receiver in the activity increases a sense of co-operation between the two. Otherwise results among this strategy were rather similar in the both writer groups. The category of offering and promising was the most popular, the percentages for the NNS are 67.9 % (22.4 % of the total), and slightly less popular in the NS letters 54.7 % (17.7 % of the total). The popularity of this category may be explained by the purpose of the letters, their aim is to sell, therefore this aim is striven for in every possible way. The category of being optimistic was slightly more popular among the native speakers' letters than among the non-native speakers' letters, the percentages are 18.7 % (6.1 % of total) in the NS letters and 11.9 % (3.9 % of total) in the NNS letters. Most of the instances of being optimistic were in the closings of the letters expressing optimism about the future meetings or negotiations. They had the standard format of '*We/I look forward to...*' which is quite commonly used in the business letters.

Claiming the common ground was the other positive politeness strategy found in the letters and it was used more in the NNS letters. The percentages for this strategy are 20.1 % (6.7 % of total) in the NNS letters and 16.0 % (5.2 % of total) in the NS letters. Two categories belonging into this strategy were found in the NNS letters, noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc. and presupposing, raising or asserting common ground. By contrast, the latter category did not occur at all in the NS letters. However, the occurrence was infrequent also in the NNS data; only 3.0 % of negative politeness strategies belonged to this category meaning only 1.0 % of the total used politeness strategies. The category of noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc., was the second most popular among all the negative politeness categories in the NNS letters, the percentages are 17.2 % (5.7 % of total). This category was the third most popular among all the negative politeness categories in the NS letters, the percentages are 16.0 % meaning 5.2 % of the total used politeness strategies. One reason for its popularity could be that it is wise for the seller to take care of the buyer's or business partner's needs because satisfied customers are the best ones.

It can be concluded that similarly to the negative politeness strategies used in the letters there was only little variation among the positive politeness strategies used in the NNS and NS letters. The only variation resulted from two categories of which the other was used only in the NNS letters and the other was used only in the NS letters. These categories were presupposing, raising or asserting common ground, which was used by the NNS, and including both the sender and the receiver in the activity, which was used by the NS. However, as mentioned above, the occurrence of these categories in the data was infrequent, therefore no generalizations can be made. When the positive politeness used in the letters are considered, the most popular, offering and promising, may be explained by the nature of the letters. Being optimistic, the second most popular category in the NS letters and the third most popular in the NNS letters, may be explained by the common practices

of business letter closings. One reason for the frequent use of noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants, needs, etc. category in the letters could be that the sender naturally tries to satisfy receiver's wishes and does what has been agreed upon maybe earlier. If the customer or business partner (i.e. receiver) is unhappy s/he will not buy anything.

6.4 Comparison of bald-on-record strategy

Of all the politeness strategies, the bald-on-record strategy was the most unpopular; compared with negative and positive politeness strategies, only 4.2 % of the all strategies were bald-on-record strategies in the NNS letters and 4.8 % in the NS letters. Additionally, there was very little difference in the amount of bald-on-record strategy between the two groups. The lesser use of bald-on-record strategy in the data is not unexpected because, as Brown and Levinson put it (1978:74), an act is performed baldly or without redress when it is done in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible. Hence bald-on-record strategy is not very appropriate in business letters. Nevertheless, most of the bald-on-record acts used by the non-native and native speakers had been softened with the conventional politeness marker '*please*'.

6.5 Implications

The comparison of the results shows that the writers in both writer groups tend to follow the similar practices in the business writing which means preferring the negative politeness to the positive politeness and bald-on-record strategies. The negative politeness is regarded as the appropriate politeness used between acquaintances such as business partners. In contrast, positive politeness is more often used between closer friends. The differences between the writer groups were very small and one reason for the result could be the good language skills of today's business professionals in Finland.

No general observations of the use of politeness strategies can be made on the basis of the findings because the limited amount of the letters. The study does, however, give some implications of the present state of business professionals' language knowledge in Finland. As mentioned above, it may be that the language skills of non-native speakers are of advanced level. The importance and help of the use of basic template for the letters cannot be underestimated. In addition, the common business conventions and politeness connected with them are repetitious and therefore quite easy to learn. Even though the differences between the two writer groups were small, it may be noted that the politeness strategies used in other countries, for example in the Asian countries, can be different. What may be appropriate in one country is not necessarily so in another country and culture. Therefore it is important to improve both the language skills and cultural awareness of the non-native speakers and writers.

7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the use of politeness strategies in authentic business letters written by the native and the non-native speakers. The results from the non-native data were compared with the results from the native speakers. The analysis shows that there are hardly any differences in the politeness strategies used by the writers and both number and types of politeness strategies seem to correspond with the business conventions. In other words, negative politeness strategies are more frequent than positive politeness strategies, and bald-on-record strategy was the most infrequent of the three. Besides, the frequencies of the used categories are very similar and there were only few exceptions to this. However, the frequencies of these exceptions are not notable. The results are unexpected because previous studies (e.g. Maier 1992, Park et al. 1998, Yli-Jokipii 1994, Paarlahti 1998) report on significant differences between the non-native and native speakers. If the results are looked at more carefully, some similarities with the previous studies can, however, be noticed.

The business 'we' was the most popular of the negative politeness strategies used in the letters. The use of the business 'we' is very abundant throughout the data in the both speaker groups. This result seems to correspond with previous studies. For example, according to Yli-Jokipii (1994:251), the business 'we' is used very often by the Finnish writers who thus imply non-animate participants, such as the company. Similarly, the American writers tend to impersonalise both the writer and reader by referring to the company name, using the plural '*we*' or employing the passive voice (Park et al. 1998:340). The frequent use of the passive is also in accordance with previous studies and the business conventions. No transfer from the non-native speakers' mother tongues can be noted, except for the capital 'y' used in one letter when writing the pronoun '*you*', found also by Paarlahti (1998) in her data.

The most popular positive politeness strategies seem to be in accordance with the aim of the quotation letter, that is, to sell or at least keep up the business relationship. The seller (i.e. sender) should satisfy the customer's (i.e. receiver's) needs with the limited means s/he has access to within the medium. The customer should be kept happy and satisfied in order to make her/him buy in the end. The only persuasive power, besides the quality of the product, of the sender is the language that will influence the receiver's impressions and the decision s/he will make. Therefore it is essential that the message gets through without any obstacles such as an inappropriate language. The most frequently used positive politeness strategies for achieving this goal were offering and promising, being optimistic, and noticing and attending to the receiver's interests, wants and needs.

The writing of business letters has certain traditions and recurrent conventions. These are realized with certain polite phrases, which can be seen as politeness strategies, like '*at your convenience*' or '*We look forward to...*', or using '*please*' when asking something. Further, these politeness strategies can be easily memorized and learned by the non-native speakers. The results of the study cannot be generalized because the sample of the letters is far too small. It does, however, suggest that the present state of business professionals' language knowledge in Finland is quite sufficient, or, the templates used in the companies are well phrased. Nevertheless the language skills must be actively and continuously kept up in order to maintain them on a good level. Further, the similarities of results of this study concern only Finnish non-native writers and American native writers. A Finnish business professional seems to write politely when compared to the American business writing, but there are different polite conventions in different countries and cultures. Therefore the improvement of cultural awareness of the non-native speakers and writers is essential.

As mentioned in chapter 0, both written and spoken communication are important skills of the companies' employees. English is the accepted

medium for international business transactions, as St John (1996:3) puts it, and there exists a lot of teaching material on the topic. However, the underlying business culture of most of the business English teaching material is a Western European or North American one. A familiarity with and understanding of this culture is also assumed from the non-native learners (St John 1996:9). It may be difficult for a non-native to see all the nuances of language and use the right kind of style in the right context. Using the wrong kind of or inappropriate impressions and wordings can cause misunderstandings or give an unprofessional impression. The worst consequence would be a lost business relationship not to mention money and maybe a lost reputation. For these reasons, among others, every careful business person should take politeness under consideration when s/he is doing business.

Politeness in business correspondence needs more research because of its importance in the business relationships. This field offers many interesting topics for further research from different viewpoints. Further studies might for example consist of a larger scale study on the differences in the non-native and native speakers' politeness in business writing. The corpus could include, for instance, native and non-native Finnish speakers. In addition, more empirical research is needed on authentic business material, containing also e-mail messages. Other interesting topics for further research could focus on how the topic of the message, level of acquaintance or the weightiness of imposition influences politeness. Also messages from different fields of business may contain different kind of politeness.

Brown and Levinson developed their theory on politeness strategies in 1978. The theory is based on a material of spoken language, hence it was at times quite difficult to apply it to written data. In addition, Brown and Levinson's categories were sometimes overlapping which made the recognition of a suitable category hard. Pilegaard had designed a modified model of Brown and Levinson's theory, but the article describing his study presented just a

summary of his study. Nevertheless, Pilegaard's study offered some helpful viewpoints for the analysis.

The motivation behind my study was that I wanted to investigate something that would be of real use. Further, I wanted to show that an English student can study something else than for example auxiliary verbs of a Shakespeare's play. There are also real-life topics available for the research if you just look for them. I was very lucky to receive the material for the analysis from the Finnish industrial company because the lack of authentic material is notable. I also hope my findings will be particularly useful for them. Besides, my search for data for my study also resulted in finding a job.

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Appendix 1. Letters written by non-native speakers

Letter I

June 1, 1999

Receiver's address
USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: PM X Press Rebuild
Company Quotation No. XX99XX9999.9

Dear First name [?]

Enclosed is our revised quote letter and Productivity and Quality Co-operation Plan for press rebuild of PM X, based on the meeting May 28, 1999.

The main changes from our previous quotation and Productivity and Quality Co-operation Plan dated May 27, 1999 are as follows:

1. The discount now is X % instead of X % as we gave you May 27, 1999, meaning that the total quotation price is X USD instead of X USD. This discount is valid for all remaining options.
2. If X accepts than roll for the XX project can be delayed and would be ready for shipment February 4, 2000 instead of Jan 14, 2000 as stated in the contract and without any delivery penalty to the Company we can give additional X USD discount for our final price. This discount will not have any effect for remaining option prices.
3. For Options we have added validity dates.
4. We have added options 21 and 22 as discussed.
5. We like to change the wording of the item 3.1.3 in Productivity and Quality Cooperation Plan so that for/whole 12 months period "negative bonus is payable only if the failure to achieve the efficiency level is directly and solely attributable to the DELIVERY. Also there are wording changes in item. 3.1.4 and 3.1.5. (deletions)

We look forward to further discussions at your convenience. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Vice President, Sales and Marketing

cc: First name Surname - Company
First name Surname - Company

Letter II

QUOTATION NOTES

Sender's address

10.2.1999

Receiver's address

KOREA

PM X new project, Concept alternative #1

QUOTATION NO. XXX999999.9.X

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your enquiry (dated 98. 12. 17) for the Customer PM X. We are pleased to submit our quotation as attached. The technical specification is delivered already earlier.

This quotation is for the high speed alternative #1 and based on the new Company's X product. The wet end of the paper machine consists of headbox with vanes and dilution control and Former gap-former with loadable blades and equal drainage through both web sides, which is the concept especially designed for woodfree grades to meet your quality requirements. The press section consists of Press with two straight nips design ensuring closed-draw, high efficiency and uniformity of both paper sides.

Coating section is based on coater concept consisting of one sizing equipment and two jet stations. X is a new multinip calender concept with polymer-covered soft rolls and heated intermediate rolls with a new stack loading principle. Final product is then reeled with Company's Reel.

The trend in new coater layouts in the world is focusing on complete on-line processes. Last example comes from Germany X X where double side X and Calender with PM are going to produce LWC grades. There are in our quotation stock several other customer who are planning to short their process lay-out by combining coating and calendering into the same line. The benefits between traditional off-machine line and new concept are among the other things: maintaining of the strength of paper, flying splices, manpower, energy consumption, investment costs.

We have followed your enquiry quite precisely. The dimensioning is based on the production speed 1500 m/min for the main grade. We have, however, increased the design and drive speed to 1600 m/min as there are lighter grades in your production plan as well. We have placed the pre-calender before all coating (also film sizing or pigmenting). We have included

coating colour preparation and automation as a part of the quotation as we think that in this kind of project all the parts of system must function well together.

The whole paper production line ON-LINE is a very sophisticated choice and we think it would be a good choice to meet your production targets and providing significant competitive advantages, However, on-line production with high speed creates challenges for operators, runnability, roll changes i.e. the overall machine efficiency. Thus we would like to emphasize the importance of good planning, engineering and training.

The concept is challenging but we do believe that combining Company's know how in delivering equipment and whole processes and Customer's know how in paper making will lead a success story. The Company is willing to do its best to make your PM X a world class reference.

But now, we would like to invite a Customer delegation for a visit to Finland (or Europe) to become acquainted with Company's X referencies already in operation. We look forward to seeing you also in Korea at your convenience to discuss the concept selection and scope alternatives for your PM X project.

Yours sincerely

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Manager

Letter III

June 17,1999

Sender's address

Receiver's address
SWEDEN

Attn: Mr. First name Surname

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed Company's quotation no. XXXX999999.9.X. The content and technology are according to the discussions with your project team in Stockholm on June 9, 1999.

We have dimensioned our portion for the paper machine rebuild according to the following data. The drive and design speed is 800 m/min and the production capacity is dimensioned for the speed of 700 m/min for 58 gsm, which means a production level of 222 t/d. More information of dimensioning you will find from the technical specification.

Our quotation for paper machine rebuild consists basically headbox, dewatering elements for wire section, deflection compensated Roll for press section and X as well as auxiliary equipment, operational spares and spare parts for these.

Additionally we have quoted Y size supply system for X and PMX winder rebuild. PMX winder rebuild might be discussed and agreed separately with the customer and you may leave it out of your proposal for Customer.

As an option our quotation consists also Size preparation system for X, Z headbox slice profile control system and a new lowering cradle for winder.

For helping you in preparing the quotation for the rest of the delivery we will also send some information and our recommendation for your help:

- diagram for dimensioning of headbox flows
- shower water consumption for wire and press section
- vacuum consumption for wire and press section
- requirements for mechanical drives / X, Y rolls
- headbox slice beam temp. control system scheme
- sizing equipment water system scheme

We have also prepared a circle drawing for the whole machine. We would like to point out that dimensioning of other parts than included in our quotation are out of our responsibility. Please ask the supplier of these to confirm the dimensioning and concept accordingly.

For paper machine controls we have included the controls of other parts than wire section dewatering elements in our quotation. For the control of dewatering elements we have included only control diagrams in our delivery. We think that it is more convenient for the project that the supplier of forming section makes the controls for these. For Roll controls we have supposed that there is room in press section control desk for these as agreed in Stockholm meeting.

An other thought that was agreed in Stockholm was that we don't include tail threading system from predryer section to X and from X to after dryer section. Only needed rope sheaves in X are included in our delivery. Our training package does not include any interpretation from English to Vietnam.

For installation supervision, start-up help and training estimations we havent included any extra time caused by local circumstances as agreed with Mr. Surname on June 17, 1999.

Additionally you will find a separate quotation no. XX999999 for PMX and PMX reels reconditioning which has already been quoted directly to the customer. Although this is a separate quotation we have now taken into account that the reconditioning will be made at the same time with the rebuild of the whole machine. This means that we use partly the same installation supervisors and inspectors for both. This quotation is a result of our condition measurements made for both machines earlier. Targets for the reel rebuilds are to improve the mechanical condition of the reels as well as runnability and the parent reel structure. Target is also to have 2200mm parent reel size after the rebuilds. We have also been informed that our competitor has quoted a totally new reel to enable 2200 mm parent reel size.

Finally we would like to point out that we have been involved in this project already for many years. Several negotiations have been held with the customer and we know the financial situation of this project very well. We have also quoted some parts directly to the customer which are now included in our quotation already earlier. The prices and the contents of the earlier quoted parts for the rebuild have also been negotiated and partly agreed with the customer. We have kept the above in mind when pricing our quotation. The prices are quite tight and not any negotiation margins are included in the prices.

We hope the information given is adequate at this stage but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Company

Signature

First name Surname

Sales Manager

Letter IV

5.5.1999

Sender's address

Attn Mr First name Surname, Technical Director

BUDGET QUOTATIONS FOR Rebuild of PMX No. XXXXXXXX999.X.X
PMX No. XXXXXXXX9999.X.X
PMX No. XXXXXXXX999.X.X

Dear Mr Surname,

Enclosed you find the budget quotations for Former top wire units separately for each three paper machines.

The technical material includes a short list of equipment included in the scope, drive power calculation and a multi-colour quotation drawing. We understand that a full, detailed technical specification is required in a later stage. We are ready to prepare that. However, our opinion is that this will be done after we have had a technical discussion with you and your staff on the projects. We believe that this is your wish as well.

The main benefits of a top wire unit are, as you are aware of, higher dewatering capacity in the wire section, formation improvement and more even fines and filler distribution across the paper sheet. The improvements in the physical properties of the paper in turn contribute to the surface properties of the paper and better runnability of the process.

To support the general knowledge of the Former unit we have enclosed a technical brochure describing the benefits and technical structure of the unit.

We trust that the information given in the quotations is of interest to you. We look forward to your comments and further discussions at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

First name Surname
Senior Sales Manager

Letter V

May 8, 1998

Sender's address

Attn. Mr. First name Surname

Receiver's address

INDIA

NEW PAPER MACHINE FOR-PAPER X MILL Y

BUDGET QUOTATION NO. XXXXX9999999.X.X

Dear Sirs,

Please find attached our budget proposal for your techno-economic studies. The quotation includes equipment for approach system, paper machine with on-line coating applicator, winder and roll handling with related auxiliaries as listed in the quotation. The Company equipment missing is stock preparation system, broke system, chemical handling and coating color kitchen. Those we would like to quote in later stage.

The prices are quite rough and based on earlier quotation of same size machines, but should give a good picture of costs for this size of machine. All equipment are priced as made in Finland. The portion of equipment that could be made in India should be discussed later when the project is more defined.

The dimensioning of the line is done according to your enquiry. Please note that during recent years the speeds of paper machines have increased dramatically. Nowadays we design this kind of lines for speeds about 1500 m/min. Actually the capacity of the quoted machine could be doubled without any major change in paper machinery costs.

We know that bagasse is of quite short fibers and paper is quite weak. However, we recommend to set target for production speed (start-up speed) at least 1000 m/min and capacity 1300 m/min (for future).

For production of 370tons/day would mean that we could a narrower machine. With a narrower but faster machine it is possible to save in machine price and also in building costs. The operation of a faster machine is not more difficult than a slower machine when furnished with a good machine automation.

I have enclosed a list of latest paper machine references in Asia area. That could also help you, if you wish to change the dimensioning base.

Please also find enclosed a brochure describing one of our references in Finland. That machine project is not similar as your project, but the brochure shows briefly all equipment in production line.

I hope that this budget quotation will help you in your feasibility studies and dimensioning the size of the machine and the mill.

Yours truly,

Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Manager

Letter VI

November 2, 1999

Receiver's address
CANADA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: XX
Company Quotation No. XXXX9999999.99

Dear First name:

Please find enclosed our revised firm quotation covering a paper machine rebuild for X.

We have revised the scope based on the discussions with you on October 25-26, 1999.

In the specification we will provide two different scenarios for PM production, based on the sheet width after dryer section. Also drying capacity has been reevaluated using current fabric tensions dryer shell thicknesses.

We are looking forward to further discussions at your convenience to review the project scope, targets, terms and conditions, etc. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please call either myself at 999-999-9999 or First name Surname at 999-999-9999.

Sincerely,

Company

Signature

First name Surname
Vice President
cc: First name Surname - XX, X

Sender's address

Letter VII

December 11, 1998

Sender's address

Receiver's address
CANADA

Dear Mr. Surname,

Enclosed you will find 2 (two) copies of the technical specification for your newsprint production line. The content of this technical specification with attached drawings illustrates the scope of the Company supply.

Our Mr. First name Surname will shortly forward the quote letter under separate cover as per your instructions.

The maximum height of the building (80 ft) will need more studies from the point of view of the building design, such as the design of the overhead crane, the upper part of the building (roof constructions) and the last but not the least the height of the basement. For that purpose we have enclosed our cross section drawing for your review.

We hope this is of interest to you and we look forward to further discussions at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Manager

cc. Mr First name Surname, X
Mr First name Surname, Company

Letter VIII

November 30, 1999

Receiver's address
PR CHINA

Dear Sir

We appreciate very much of your interest to the Company technology and the opportunity you have given us to show our view, how a modern LWC line will be designed.

Attached please find Company's Budget Quotation no. XXX999999.X.X for the paper manufacturing line from the Short Circulation System to the Roll Wrapping and Handling System. The paper machine itself represents an On-Machine Coating Concept where coating is carried out by X film coater. After paper machine there is Rereeler, Off-Machine multinip Calender and Winder. Our quotation consists also Air Systems, Chemical Systems, Stock, Water and Broke Systems as well as Automation and Mill Engineering.

We have dimensioned the paper machine for the daily production of 608 tons (100% efficiency). This means about 155 000 tons yearly production when having 340 operating days in a year and taking into account the efficiency of 75% in calculations. The drive and design speed of the paper machine is 1300 m/min and the production capacity is dimensioned for the speed of 1250 m/min for 60 gsm. The paper width after winder is 5521 mm. From the circle drawing of the paper manufacturing line you will notice that there are only minimum amount of storage places for full tambours between the paper machine reel and rereeler, rereeler and X calender as well as between X calender and winder. Additional storage places can be added to the line or these can be located beside the machine line if needed.

We ask you to notice that the equipment for the stock blending area are not included in our Quotation now but can be included afterwards depending on your request.

An other matter which we would like to point out is that the prices are estimated without taking account the local manufacturing in China. The local manufacturing can be taken into account afterwards, for example after you have published the Bidding Documents for this project.

We hope that the quotation and the supporting material is of interest to you. We wish that the project can proceed favourable and are ready to further discussions at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Manager

Sender's address

Letter IX

11.12.1997

Receiver's address
INDONESIA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname
Mr. First name Surname

PMX Rebuild

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed please find the Company's technical specification No. XXXX9999999.9.X for the budget quotation No. XXXX9999999.9.X for Your Paper Machine No. X. Rebuild. The quotation letter will be sent in a separate cover. The quotation includes the rebuild of the existing former, a new X shoe press in the 3rd nip position, dryer section rebuild and new X soft calender.

Your targets of this rebuild proposal according to our understanding are the following :

- improve the runnability of the former by reducing the mist formation in the wire section and consequently improve the cleanliness of the wire section and the fabrics
- ease up and shorten the top wire change time
- increase the drying capacity and runnability and thus the speed and production
- improve the surface printing quality

Keeping these targets in mind the Company proposes certain modifications which are shortly listed below and are specified in more detail in the technical specification.

1. Former

In the forming section following modifications have been quoted :

- top wire guide roll location is changed to be inside of the top wire loop
- following new equipment have been proposed
- vacuum fabric cleaner for the top wire
- air exhaust system
- mist collector for the bottom wire
- new doctor for the top wire guide roll
- new shower pipes according to specification
- new brackets as necessary

Other equipment in the proposed former rebuild are existing.

2. Press section and 1st group of dryer section

To increase the dryness after press section and to improve the drying capacity the Company proposes following modifications

- X shoe press in the 3rd press position including
- new X covered X center roll with double doctor and new X roll in the top position
- new uhle boxes with edge wetting showers for 3rd press felt
- new press run blow boxes (runnability improvement)
- belt change equipment
- frame modifications
- the existing 1st group of existing dryer section is proposed to be replaced by a new X dryer divided into two drive groups and comprising
- seven new dia 1830 mm cylinders on top and
- seven vacuum assisted X on bottom
- new X blow box and X ventilator system
- necessary new doctors, fabric rolls and framing
- ropeless tail threading system

There are certain advantages to locate the shoe press in the proposed 3rd press location compared to the existing 4th press location (previous proposal).

The benefits of the present proposal are as follows :

- the runnability is better because the sheet dryness is now higher before the 1st open draw.
- the force required to release the paper from the center roll is lower - thus the paper draw is obviously smaller
- the sensitivity to breaks is lower
- the dryness after the press compared to the existing level of 42 - 43 % is estimated to be about 4 % higher. This is about 1 % unit higher compared to the previous estimation where the shoe press was in the 4th press position.
- additionally the space of the existing 4th press can now be utilized for drying

3. Calender

According to Your request the Company has quoted X calender with two nips.

We hope that our budgetary quotation meets your requirements at this stage and we are happy to discuss about it in more detail at your convenience. In case any questions should arise, please do not hesitate to contact the Company.

Yours very truly,

Signature

First name Surname

cc First name Surname, Company

Letter X

September 18, 1998

Sender's address

Receiver's address
UNITED KINGDOMPM X REBUILD
Our quotation No. XXX9X999999.9

Dear Mr. Surname [?]

Attached please find our revised quotation with the changes agreed during the meeting in X on September 1st and 2nd.

I have enclosed a summary of all changes in the technical specification as well as the revised pages, drawings and schemes.

Separately we have already sent space requirement drawings for hydraulic and lubrication units and a proposal for trial runs with your furnish in X.

The price has somewhat increased from the previous quotation due to scope completion such as

- vacuum piping modifications for wire section
- approach pipe modifications
- instrumentation equipment.
- modification of rolls for oil lubrication
- other minor additions

The scope of the rebuild is now quite complete for all modifications that needs to take place because of the new equipment and/or concept change.

In the previous meeting, a question was raised about the need of rebalancing of rolls for the new higher production speed. The quotation, however, doesn't include any roll rebalancing work or strengthening of roll supports or reconditioning of parts and components that are not "touched" in the scope of the rebuild. In the matter of the fact, it would be quite impossible to determine exactly the needed work for this kind of tasks.

Fortunately a machine analysis has been performed for your PM X in spring 1996 (report Machine Analysis number 999999). I have discussed with Mr First name Surname from The Company Service/X and he promised to contact you and your maintenance people to discuss in which extent the recommended actions in the report have been realized and what still could be done. There is a period of 1½ years to be utilized before the start-up of the rebuild.

The Company has also revised the air systems part of the quotation according to the discussion. In the next meeting the scope could be presented more in details.

Y confirmed that their scope includes similar improvements that has already been realized at PM X.

The Company Z is aware of the scope of our quotation and their quotation will complement the scope of the machine controls included in the paper machine scope. They have for instance included new operator consoles for stock preparation and PM wet end.

The spare parts were agreed to discussed at a later stage and we haven't changed anything of them at this point.

Finally, please find attached the answers from Mr First name Surname to your questions addressed during the technical meeting September 1-2, 1998.

I hope our proposal helps you in the finalizing the investment proposal and please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information.

I look forward to seeing you in coming negotiations.

Yours sincerely
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Manager

Appendix 2. Letters written by native speakers

Letter IXX

February 15, 2000

Receiver's address
USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: XX PM
Company Quotation No. XXX999999.99

Dear First name:

Enclosed is our revised quote for the BOX Machine at Customer PM X. The main changes since our last meeting are as follows:

1. We will take full responsibility for the equipment condition.
2. The scope of field services has been increased to the K2 level.
3. All the dryers are included as originally built,
4. The steam and condensate system has been deleted.
5. A full warranty is included.
6. Two options are included for special motors and controls converted to US standards.
7. The terms of the first payment have been revised based on our recent discussion.

We look forward to our discussion on February 17.

Sincerely,

Company

Signature

First name Surname
Capital Sales Manager
Company

Sender's address

Letter XX

May 2, 1996

Sender's address

Receiver's address
USAAttention: First name Surname
XX Purchasing Department

Reference: XX, X PM X

Company Quotation No. XX99XX9999
XX Inquiry 9999-X9999

Dear Mr. Surname:

Enclosed are three sets of our proposal for the new coated wood-free line for XX at X. We have also mailed four sets to First name Surname at X. Please note that the proposal is divided into two binders, labeled Part I and Part II. Section 6 (Part I binder) has been reserved for the supercalender proposal, and likewise; Section 7 (Part II binder) has been reserved for the Winder proposal.

These two previously issued proposals may be added if you so desire such that our complete proposal for the entire line is continued within these two binders.

We have also included one set of loose prints of two additional drawings for you and Mr. Surname (additional sets will be mailed tomorrow due to printer problems). One drawing shows the off-machine layout with a two-station coater, supercalender and winder; the other shows the four-station coater with supercalender and winder for comparison (not quoted).

We apologize for the delay in submitting this quotation but trust you find it meets your needs, at this stage of the project.

If you have any questions, please call me at (999) 999-9999.

Sincerely,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Manager

Enclosure

cc: First name Surname - XX
First name Surname – Company

Letter XXI

August 10, 1999

Sender's address

Receiver's address
USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: XX PM X
Company Quotation No XXXX999999.99

Dear Mr. Surname:

We are pleased to send you our revised quotation for your X machine rebuild at XX. This revision is based on your comments and questions, dated July 20 and July 29. The quotation letter, technical specification, and drawing have been updated accordingly. The quotation letter shows as options the pricing changes requested, in addition to the base proposal.

The main change is inverting the shoe press with the belt roll in the top position. This layout provides better water removal after the nip. The base quote now also includes an exhaust system for the steambox area; all other changes are listed separately as options.

We hope these changes to the press, as well as the whole machine, better reflect your desires for the rebuild. We look forward to our next meetings on August 11 and August 18 to discuss our quotation in detail.

Sincerely,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Managercc: Mr. First name Surname - XX, X
Mr. First name Surname - Company
Mr. First name Surname - Company
Mr. First name Surname - Company

Letter XXII

January 19, 1998

Sender's address

Receiver's address

USA

Attention: First name Surname

Reference: Company XX, XX PMX Headbox
Company XX's Inquiry No. XXX-XXX/XX-999
Company Quotation No. XXX9XX9999

Dear Mr. Surname:

Attached please find our firm quotation No. XXX9XX9999 for a new headbox for your XX PM.

We have updated our earlier quotation sent *to Company NN* in December 1997 to correspond *to* our latest design and delivery time. This quotation includes enclosures with additional information.

We are ready for further discussions at your convenience. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
Company

Signature

Sales Manager
Enclosures
cc: Mr. First name Surname

Letter XXIII

March 29,1998

Sender's address

Receiver's address
USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Subject: PM X Rebuild
Company Quotation No. XX99XX9999.99

Dear First name:

Please find enclosed our firm quotation describing a paper machine rebuild consisting of:

- Press 'Rebuild
- Dryer Section Modifications
- X Winder

Also enclosed are budget prices for new roll handling equipment and engineering services for existing wrapper relocation.

We sincerely trust that this quotation is Satisfactory and suits your requirements. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 999-999-9999.

We are looking forward to working with you towards this project and will be available for further discussions at your convenience.

Yours truly,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Managercc: First name Surname
First name Surname
First name Surname
First name Surname

Letter XXIV

June 30, 1995

Sender's address

Receiver's address
USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: XX PM X
Company Quotation No. XX99XX9999

Dear First name:

Enclosed is our quotation for the rebuild of PM X at X per your earlier request. The scope includes a gap former, shoe press on the 3rd nip and modifications to the dryer section. An alternative is given for upgrading the existing hybrid unit rather than converting the wet end to a gap former (allows reuse of existing headbox).

We have evaluated the drying for both the 16 1/2 lb, grade and the 20 lb grade. Our recommendation is to move the sizing equipment downstream and relocate 4 dryers from the aftersection to the main section. This would result in 2 X sections with X rolls and 3 double felted sections in the main dryer section. We have calculated the instantaneous production rate to be 820 TPD for both grades with this layout. The lighter weight would operate at a speed of 3871 fpm and the heavy weight at 3190 fpm. For the high speed light weights, we strongly recommend the HHS gap former. However, if the machine is targeted for heavier weights only, then the rebuild of your existing hybrid unit would be adequate. Note that new felt rolls are recommended for the bottom felt pockets due to the higher felt tension.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss the details of our quotation at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Company

Signature

First name Surname
Sales Managercc: First name Surname
First name Surname
First name Surname
First name Surname

Letter XXV

June 16, 2000

Receiver's address
USA

Attention:

Reference: XX PM X
Company Quotation No. XXXX99999.99

Dear: First name Surname

As requested during our last meeting on June 7, 2000, we are pleased to enclose our quotation No. XXXX99999.99 covering a rebuild of your No. X Paper Machine.

The attached proposal considers Company's Former top former technology as well as our X option. We arranged our warranty proposal separate for each former option.

Our proposal also covers the latest proven press technology.

The spare parts have been quoted showing the capital spares and minor spares as separate items and the spares have been itemized in the specifications.

Our proposal also provides take out prices for the press nip blow box & air systems t h e press run blow box & air systems, and the mist collector on the Former & XX options. We have also provided an add-on price for a support and tray that would be required should you consider changing the belt roll on the floor.

As stated in our last proposal on May 12, 2000 the estimated shut schedule referred to in our specification is an estimate only of the manpower required. The actual schedule will be determined in joint discussions between the mill project team, the erector and the Company.

We appreciate the opportunity of supplying our proposal and look forward to reviewing it with you and your project team in the near future. Should you have any questions concerning this proposal please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Signature

Capital Sales Manager
Company

Sender's address

Letter XXVI

January 14, 1999

Sender's address

Receiver's address
USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: Customer XX
PM X Rebuild
Company Quotation No. XX99XXX999.9

Dear First name Surname:

We are pleased to submit our revised Company Quotation No. X99XXX999.9 for your No.XX paper machine upgrade. Our proposal is largely based on our December 11, 1998 meeting held at your XX mill. The general areas covered in our proposal include a X Former, a new 4th press, dryer section modifications, and the high speed coater splicing unwind. We are also quoting as an option 3rd press rebuild and a steambox.

Please note that our commercial section for the on machine products will be sent to you under a separate cover on Friday January 15, 1999. The complete offer for your off machine coater is enclosed.

As requested we have prepared this proposal to reflect our firm offer to you; however, there are a number of technical issues that we wish to qualify with you during the planned meeting on January 21, 1999, scheduled for 1:00 PM at your XX mill. Items such as:

- Former
 - Modified frame design
 - Flexibility to production condition changes
 - Superior loading element design
- Improved 4th press design
 - 4th press top roll and pick-up suction roll are similar to the existing
 - Minimal amount of civil work needed, felt and roll change features
 - Accessibility to 4th press saveall
 - Pre-shutdown work and preassembly possibilities
- Special features of our roll
 - Optional 3rd press rebuild
 - Improved transfer to 4th press

- Improved 3rd press felt change
- Improved tail threading to 4th press

Also we would welcome further discussion on the off machine coater where we have offered two separate splicing and winder opportunities. One option being a new high speed coater splicing unwind and a second option to rebuild the existing unit an option that would allow you to consider two phases approach to reach the desired 4800 FPM with very high efficiency.

We do appreciate the opportunity to submit our proposal for your consideration and look forward to meeting with you and your group on January 27, 1999. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience should you have any questions. We will send you contact names and numbers at mills that have the same or similar Company equipment. The Company's team is ready to be of service.

Sincerely,

Company

Signature

First name Surname

Sales Manager

cc: Mr. First name Surname (5 copies - technical 8 drawings)

Company's address

Letter XXVII

May 28, 1998

Sender's address

Receiver's address

USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: Proposed New Headbox for X,
Company Quotation No. XX99XX9999

Dear First name Surname:

With respect to our telephone conversation today, please find our updated quotation No. XX99XX9999 for a new headbox for PM X.

To ensure that the project scope is defined, we will be pleased to meet with you and discuss this further.

Should you have any questions, please call me at (999) 999-9999.

Yours truly,

Signature

Company

First name Surname

Sales Manager

Letter XXVIII

April 14, 1999

Sender's address

Receiver's address

USA

Attention: Mr. First name Surname

Reference: PM X Press Rebuild

Company Quotation No. XX99XX99999.9

Dear First name:

Enclosed is our revised specification for a firm price quotation for the press rebuild of PM X , based on our meeting April 8, 1999.

The main changes from our previous quotation, dated January 27, 1999 are as follows:

1. This quote is firm pricing; the previous quote was a budget price.
2. Rolls and blowboxes (4 each) have been deleted from the second dryer group (quoted as an option).
3. All uhle boxes are existing.
4. All oscillators are existing or new by others.
5. All external gear reducers, drive shafts, and guards are by others (roll internal gear reducers by Company).
6. The scope has been reduced to reflect a reconfiguration of the existing system only.
7. We have included an option for mechanical installation of the air systems.
8. The weight of the roll has been re-estimated. The previous estimate was 79 short tons; the revised estimate is 69.4 short tons which is within the modified crane capacity of 70 short tons.
8. An option has been added to provide MD tilt capability of the shoe press on the run.
9. The steam system scope has been reduced to schematic piping and control drawings only (no equipment).
10. An additional power requirements calculation is included based on an acceleration rate of 1687ft/min/min.
12. We have deleted four (4) Ventilators (existing).
13. We have added a second dryer doctor, one additional felt guide mechanism, two additional sets of dryer bars, stainless, cladding of basement frames, upgraded hose couplings to X, and added new mountings for the existing steambox.

14. We have reduced our estimate of installation time to 18 days. However, we are still reviewing the design concept for the new press frames to further reduce the installation time and total related project cost.

Payment Terms and General Terms and Conditions will be further discussed during commercial negotiations to comply with our Company agreements.

We look forward to further discussions at your convenience. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at: (999) 999-9999 or name@company.com.

Sincerely,

Signature

Company

First name Surname

Sales Manager