

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

Section 2.1 reviews the theoretical framework that is related to the present study. Two theories that are central to the present study are speech act theory and politeness theory. Both theories form the theoretical framework upon which this study's analysis of data is based.

#### **2.1.1 Speech act theory**

The speech act theory was originally proposed by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1979). The concepts of speech acts, types of speech acts and directives will be examined in the following sections as they are essential in the identification of directives in the current study.

##### **2.1.1.1 Speech acts**

Speech acts, according to Yule (1996), are utterances with the function of performing actions. A speech act consists of three related acts, namely locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act refers to the production of a meaningful utterance. The actual form of the words used in the utterance is known as the locution. Meanwhile illocutionary act refers to the production of an utterance with a specific purpose in mind. The function or intention of the utterance is called the illocutionary force of the utterance. Perlocutionary act refers to the production of an utterance for the reason of creating an effect. The perlocutionary effect is the effect an utterance has on the hearer. Yule (1996) states that a speech act can be analysed on the three levels of locution, illocution and perlocution.

Speech acts can be direct or indirect depending on the structure and function of the utterance (Yule, 1996). If the structure of the utterance corresponds directly with its function, it is a direct speech act. However, if there is an indirect correlation between the structure of the utterance and its function, the utterance is an indirect speech act. Therefore, a statement in the form of a declarative is a direct speech act but a request in the form of a declarative is an indirect speech act.

Based on the different kinds of circumstances underlying speech acts, Searle (1979) classifies speech acts into five basic categories, which include assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. Firstly, assertives are speech acts that express what the speaker believes to be the case. Descriptions, claims, conclusions and deductions are some instances of assertives. Secondly, directives are speech acts that seek to cause the hearer to do something. Commands, requests and invitations are some members of this category. Thirdly, the speech acts of commissives bind the speaker to some future action. Speech acts that belong in this class include promises, offers and refusals. Fourthly, expressives are speech acts that convey what the speaker feels about something specified in the utterance. Some forms of expressives are apologies and compliments. The final category of speech acts; that is, declarations, bring about change in reality that corresponds with what is uttered, thereby changing the world through their actual utterance. Examples of members of this class are resignations and court judgments.

Searle (1979) also puts forward a set of conditions that must be fulfilled for a speech act to be recognised as what it was intended by its speaker to be. These conditions are known as felicity conditions. In the case of directives, for a directive to be recognised as one, it must meet the preparatory condition, which states that the hearer ought to have the ability to perform the action that the speaker requires of him. Second, the directive must meet the sincerity condition, which states that the speaker

has to be genuine in wanting the hearer to perform the action the speaker requires of the hearer. Furthermore, the directive must fulfil the propositional content condition, which entails the speaker to state the future action the hearer is expected to perform. Finally, the directive must fulfil the essential condition, which entails the utterance to be regarded as a directive.

Although directives have been classified in a number of ways, several models of directives have proven to be influential in the study of speech acts. These models, which include Ervin-Tripp's (1976), Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989), and Bach and Harnish's (1979) classifications, will be reviewed in the following sections.

#### **2.1.1.2 Ervin-Tripp's model of directives (1976)**

Ervin-Tripp's (1976) model of directives is based on empirical research. Her findings indicate that there are six types of directives exchanged between adults, namely (cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977, pp. 166-167):

- (1) Personal need or desire statements
- (2) Imperatives
- (3) Imbedded imperatives
- (4) Permission directives
- (5) Questions directives
- (6) Hints

The first type, personal need or desire statements appear to be statements in the grammatical form of declaratives that state the speaker's need or desire for the object of the action required of the hearer. This type of directive is usually from a more powerful speaker to a less powerful speaker when the action required of the hearer is necessary (Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Weigel & Weigel, 1985).

The second type, imperatives are directives in the syntactical form of imperatives that state the action required of the hearer. These are normally expressed by a more powerful speaker to a less powerful speaker in the presence of familiars when the action

is not necessary but expected of the hearer. Besides, these are also exchanged between a speaker and a hearer who are acquainted with each other, or who are equals in terms of status or age (Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Weigel & Weigel, 1985).

Imbedded imperatives are directives in the form of syntactical imperatives that state the action required of the hearer but with mitigating devices such as “would you”, “kindly” as well as address forms. This type of directive is exchanged between a speaker and a hearer who are unacquainted or unequal in power with the speaker being less powerful than the hearer. However, imbedded imperatives may also be given by a more powerful speaker to a less powerful hearer under the following circumstances: non-familiars are present, the action required by the directive is not expected of the hearer, or the speaker is in the territory of the hearer (Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Weigel & Weigel, 1985).

As for permission directives, these appear to be grammatical interrogatives that seek permission to obtain or do something. These are either directed from less powerful speakers to more powerful speakers or exchanged between speakers and hearers who are unacquainted (Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Weigel & Weigel, 1985).

The fifth type of directive proposed by Ervin-Tripp (1976) is question directives, which seem to take the syntactical form of interrogatives that seek information from the hearer with the action required of the hearer or the object of the action often omitted. Question directives are given when the hearer may not comply with the directive (Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Weigel & Weigel, 1985).

Inference and mutual knowledge of situations, customs and motives are needed to recognise hints, the final type of directive listed by Ervin-Tripp (1976). Hints are

usually given under any or all of the following circumstances: the hearer may not comply with the directive, the speaker and the hearer are not acquainted, or the directive is part of a routine (Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1976 cited in Weigel & Weigel, 1985).

In short, Ervin-Tripp's (1976) model differentiates directives primarily in terms of degree of directness and social factors that influence the choice of each type of directive. Even though the model outlines the various forms utilised to express directives, it is relatively inapplicable for the present study as not all directives fall neatly into the categories it describes. For instance, let us examine the following directive, which is an extract from the data of the present study.

872 T1: **proofread your answer , please recheck your grammar then pass it**  
873 **to me , I don't want to mark so much**

If the directive were to be classified according to Ervin-Tripp's (1976) model, it would fall under the categories of imperative, imbedded imperative as well as personal need and desire statement. As a result, there would be difficulty in analysing the data for the current study. Moreover, the model does not delve into the function of each type of directive, which is a focus of the current study.

### **2.1.1.3 Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's model of requests (1989)**

According to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) model of requests, each request sequence may include the head act, alerters and supportive moves.

The head act is the central part of the request sequence that can stand alone to realise the request. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) put forward nine request strategies utilised in realising the head act of the request sequence. The request strategies proposed are as follows (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, pp. 18, 278-281):

- Direct strategies
- (1) Mood derivable
- (2) Performatives
- (3) Hedged performative
- (4) Obligation statements
- (5) Want statements
- Conventionally indirect strategies
- (6) Suggestory formulae
- (7) Query preparatory
- Non-conventionally indirect strategies
- (8) Strong hints
- (9) Mild hints

These strategies are classified according to degrees of directness from most direct to least direct. Directness, according to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), refers to the explicitness of the speaker in revealing his communicative purpose in the words used in his utterance. Therefore, the more rapidly an utterance can be identified as a request, the more direct it is.

The five most direct strategies are collectively named direct strategies. The most direct of these, mood derivable is usually realised through syntactical forms whose grammatical mood signals requests or commands such as imperatives, infinitives and elliptical forms. The second most direct of these, performatives are realised through the use of performative verbs that overtly identify the illocutionary intent of the utterance. Likewise, hedged performatives consist of performative verbs that clearly indicate the illocutionary intent of the utterance although these verbs are mitigated via modal verbs. As for obligation statements, they are realised by stating that the hearer is obliged to perform the act requested of him. Want statements are requests in the form of statements denoting the speaker's wish for the action in the request to be fulfilled.

Meanwhile, the two subsequent strategies are called conventionally indirect strategies. Suggestory formulae are requests in the form of suggestions whereas query preparatory is realised by asking the hearer whether he is able, willing or likely to perform the act requested of him.

The final two strategies are known as non-conventionally indirect strategies. Strong hints consist of some indication of something required to perform the act requested. Mild hints neither indicate the actual request itself nor the elements required to perform the action requested; nonetheless, the illocutionary force of the utterances are decipherable by context.

Another component of the request sequence is alerters. They are parts of the request sequence that focus the hearer's attention to the request. These are forms of address such as titles, roles, family names, given names, nicknames, rude names and pronouns (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989).

Supportive moves are parts of the request sequence external to the head act that intensify or mitigate the impact of the request. Two types of supportive moves mentioned by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) are mitigating supportive moves and aggravating supportive moves. Mitigating supportive moves, which function to strengthen the force of the request, are preparators, getting pre-commitment, grounders, disarmers, promises of reward and imposition minimisers while aggravating supportive moves, which function to weaken the force of the request, are insults, threats and moralising.

Similar to Ervin-Tripp's (1976) model of directives, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) model of requests distinguishes the various types of directives based on their degrees of indirectness although the latter is more comprehensive as it identifies the different parts of the request sequence including the strategies and grammatical forms that may be used to realise them. Even so, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) model does not take account of the communicative function of each type of request, thus causing it to be somewhat unsuitable for the present study.

#### **2.1.1.4 Bach and Harnish's model of directives (1979)**

Bach and Harnish (1979) propose that directives can be classified into six categories on the basis of the attitudes communicated by the speaker. These categories are as follows (Bach & Harnish, 1979, pp. 47-49):

- (1) Requestives
- (2) Questions
- (3) Requirements
- (4) Prohibitives
- (5) Permissives
- (6) Advisories

Requestives are made for the communicative purpose of causing the hearer to carry out a certain action. Requestive verbs include “ask, beg, beseech, implore, insist, invite, petition, plead, pray, request, solicit, summon, supplicate, tell, urge” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 47).

Questions fulfil the communicative goal of causing the hearer to give the speaker specific information. Some instances of question verbs are “ask, inquire, interrogate, query, question, quiz” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 47).

Requirements meet the communicative purpose of causing the hearer to carry out a particular action because of the speaker's physical, psychological or institutional power over the hearer. Requirement verbs are “bid, charge, command, demand, dictate, direct, enjoin, instruct, order, prescribe, require” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 47).

Prohibitives are used for the communicative goal of causing the hearer to not carry out a specific action because of the speaker's physical, psychological or institutional power over the hearer. Some examples of prohibitive verbs include “enjoin, forbid, prohibit, proscribe, restrict” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 47).

Permissives are made for the communicative purpose of giving the hearer the freedom to carry out a certain action because of the physical, psychological or institutional power the speaker holds over the hearer. The permissive verbs listed are



“agree to, allow, authorize, bless, consent to, dismiss, excuse, exempt, forgive, grant, license, pardon, release, sanction” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 47).

Advisories fulfil the communicative goal of causing the hearer to carry out a specific action because the action benefits the hearer. Advisory verbs listed by Bach and Harnish include “admonish, advise, caution, counsel, propose, recommend, suggest, urge, warn” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 48).

In sum, Bach and Harnish’s (1979) model categorises directives according to their communicative function or the speaker’s intent in making the directive, providing some insight into the speaker’s reasons for giving the directive. Hence, this model is applicable for the analysis of data in the current study specifically in the identification of the types of directives found in classroom discourse.

### **2.1.2 Politeness theory**

There are two significant theories on politeness, namely Leech’s (1983) Politeness Principle and Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness strategies. As the focus of the present study is the politeness strategies used to perform directives in ESL classrooms, these theories of politeness as well as the factors that influence the expression of politeness will also be examined in the subsequent sections.

#### **2.1.2.1 Leech’s Politeness Principle (1983)**

Leech’s (1983) Politeness Principle seeks to explain the reasons for indirectness and non-observance of Grice’s maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner in producing speech acts. A theoretical approach to politeness, the Politeness Principle states that impolite views and utterances should be decreased as much as possible while polite ones are increased (Leech, 1983 cited in Thomas, 1995). Leech’s (1983)

Politeness Principle comprises six maxims, namely Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy.

The Tact maxim is hearer-centred, stating “Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other” (Leech, 1983 cited in Thomas, 1995, p. 160). To adhere to the Tact maxim, a directive ought to emphasise the benefits of the action in the directive to the hearer while de-emphasising the cost the hearer must bear in performing the action.

On the other hand, the Generosity maxim is speaker-centred, stating “Minimize the expression of benefit to self; maximize the expression of cost to self” (Leech, 1983 cited in Thomas, 1995, p. 162). Hence, a directive is deemed polite if it emphasises the cost of the action in the directive to the speaker while de-emphasising the benefits of the action to the speaker.

The third maxim, Approbation is hearer-centred. It maintains that one should “Minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other; maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other” (Leech, 1983 cited in Thomas, 1995, p. 162). Observance of the Approbation maxim requires a directive to stress agreement with and appreciation for the hearer.

In contrast, the Modesty maxim is speaker-centred, maintaining that one should “Minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self” (Leech, 1983 cited in Thomas, 1995, p. 163). Therefore, a directive that is polite depreciates the speaker as much as possible.

As for the Agreement maxim, it says that one should “Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximize the expression of agreement between self and other” (Leech, 1983 cited in Thomas, 1995, p. 165). Thus, a polite directive is one that stresses agreement and cooperation between the speaker and the hearer.

Finally, the Sympathy maxim says that one should “‘minimise antipathy between self and other’ and ‘maximise sympathy between self and other’” (Leech, 1983 cited in Cutting, 2002, p. 50). To observe the Sympathy maxim, a directive must pay attention to what the hearer requires, desires and takes interest in.

A criticism directed at Leech’s (1983) Politeness Principle is that the theory cannot be disproved as an unlimited number of new maxims can be created to cover gaps in the theory (Cutting, 2002; Thomas, 1995). Other than that, Leech’s (1983) model does not specify the linguistic forms that are associated with each maxim. Therefore, the model is impractical for the purpose of analysing the data in the current study.

#### **2.1.2.2 Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies (1987)**

Politeness is generally understood to mean good manners, congeniality and consideration towards other people. However, as a linguistic term, politeness refers to the methods used by the speaker to show that he or she is aware of the hearer’s face, which is the feeling of self-worth a person has or “that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognise” (Yule, 1996, p. 60).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are two aspects to face; namely, positive face and negative face. A person’s positive face can be seen in his or her desire to be regarded as a group member and to share his or her wants with other people. In other words, positive face is a person’s need for acceptance, approval and appreciation by others. On the other hand, a person’s negative face can be seen in his desire to act as he wishes and to be free from being impeded by other people. In other words, a person’s negative face is his need for freedom and independence.

Face can be improved, preserved and harmed via daily interaction with others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). If an illocutionary act has the inherent potential to harm

either the speaker's or the hearer's face, it is identified as a face threatening act or FTA. Directives can be described as FTAs because they threaten the speaker's positive face and the hearer's negative face. When performing a directive, the speaker risks harming his desire to be accepted if his directive is rejected while the hearer risks being forced into doing something he does not want to do.

Brown and Levinson (1987) offer five strategies that a speaker can choose from to deal with FTAs, with 5 as the most polite and 1 as the least polite (see Figure 2.1). The speaker will first decide whether to perform the FTA or not. If the speaker decides to do the FTA, he or she has the option of three sets of 'on record' strategies and one set of 'off record' strategies. However, the speaker could elect to avoid the FTA completely if he or she feels that the degree of threat to either the speaker's or hearer's face is too great. In fact, it is argued by Brown and Levinson (1987) that the likelihood of the speaker deciding on a higher-numbered strategy increases as the risk of damage to the speaker's or hearer's face increases.

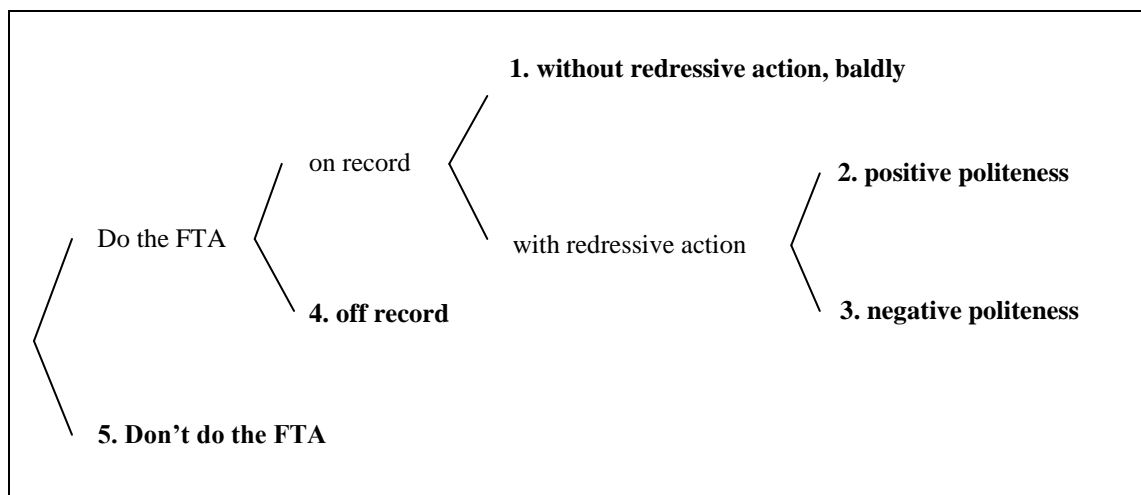


Figure 2.1: Strategies for dealing with FTAs  
(Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69)

#### 2.1.2.2.1 Bald on record

An FTA may be performed without any redress, which “involves doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible” (Brown & Levinson, 1987,

p. 69). Performing an FTA bald on record, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is akin to adhering to Grice's (1975) maxims of cooperation. These could be summarised as to say only what is required truthfully, relevantly and unambiguously. The bald on record strategy is only preferred when urgency and efficiency take precedence over face, potential damage to the hearer's face is slight or doing the FTA benefits the hearer. The speaker's possession of far greater power than the hearer is also another reason for selecting this strategy in doing an FTA.

#### **2.1.2.2.2 Positive politeness**

Conversely, an FTA may be performed with redressive action in the form of positive politeness; that is, action that maintains the positive face of the hearer. In employing positive politeness, the speaker appeals to the hearer's positive face by alluding to familiarity and common goals, values or wants. There are fifteen positive politeness strategies as identified by Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 102):

- (1) Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)
- (2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
- (3) Intensify interest to H
- (4) Use in-group identity markers
- (5) Seek agreement
- (6) Avoid disagreement
- (7) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
- (8) Joke
- (9) Assert of presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants
- (10) Offer, promise
- (11) Be optimistic
- (12) Include both S and H in the activity
- (13) Give (or ask for) reasons
- (14) Assume or assert reciprocity
- (15) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

Three basic techniques are involved in the strategies of positive politeness. In strategies (1) to (8), positive politeness is conveyed by the speaker to the hearer through the technique of claiming common ground. Strategies (9) to (14) redress the positive face of the hearer via the technique of communicating cooperation between the speaker

and the hearer while strategy (15) via the technique of satisfying the hearer's want for something.

#### **2.1.2.2.3 Negative politeness**

An FTA may also be performed with redress in the form of negative politeness. In this case, the speaker appeals to the hearer's negative face with redressive action such as apologies for interruption and deference through mitigating devices. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 131) identify ten negative politeness strategies that can be used to deal with FTAs:

- (1) Be conventionally indirect
- (2) Question, hedge
- (3) Be pessimistic
- (4) Minimise the imposition
- (5) Give deference
- (6) Apologise
- (7) Impersonalise S and H
- (8) State the FTA as a general rule
- (9) Nominalise
- (10) Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H

The strategies of negative politeness involve five basic techniques, which are being direct (strategy (1)), avoiding presumptions or assumptions (strategy (2)), avoiding coercing the hearer (strategies (3) to (5)), conveying the speaker's desire to not impose on the hearer (strategies (6) to (9)) and redressing the speaker's other desires (strategy (10)).

#### **2.1.2.2.4 Off record**

In dealing with an FTA, the speaker may also choose to go off record. Performing an FTA off record involves using linguistic devices such as metaphors, irony, rhetorical questions, understatement and hints so that the speaker's wants is conveyed in an indirect way. In going off record, the speaker tries to communicate more than what he

or she actually says. Fifteen off record strategies have been developed by Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 214):

- (1) Give hints
- (2) Give association clues
- (3) Presuppose
- (4) Understate
- (5) Overstate
- (6) Use tautologies
- (7) Use contradictions
- (8) Be ironic
- (9) Use metaphors
- (10) Use rhetorical questions
- (11) Be ambiguous
- (12) Be vague
- (13) Over-generalise
- (14) Displace H
- (15) Be incomplete, use ellipsis

Two basic techniques are involved in employing off record strategies. Indirection is achieved in strategies (1) to (10) through the technique of inducing of conversational implicatures and in strategies (11) to (15) via the technique of vagueness or ambiguousness and violation of Grice's (1975) manner maxim.

All in all, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model outlines the strategies of politeness by providing specific examples of the linguistic forms that are used in the adoption of the strategies. Moreover, the model and its examples are derived from sound empirical data. Thus, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness strategies is applied in the identifying of politeness involved in the realisation of classroom directives in the current study.

### **2.1.2.3 Determinants of politeness strategies**

There are several factors that determine the selection of politeness strategies in doing FTAs. These are inherent advantages of each politeness strategy, social distance, power, rank of imposition, rights and obligation, manipulation of pragmatic factors, the desire to be interesting and the need to create an impactful message.

Brown and Levinson (1987) indicate that each one of the politeness strategies affords certain inherent advantages, which helps the speaker to decide on a strategy to employ. The on record strategy allows the speaker to be clear, to be efficient and to be seen as frank and non-manipulative. Positive politeness strategies provide the speaker with the opportunity to fulfil the hearer's positive face wants to some degree. Negative politeness strategies offer the speaker the opportunity to maintain the hearer's negative face wants in some way. With off record strategies, the speaker is able to satisfy the hearer's negative face even more than is possible with negative politeness and to evade responsibility for the FTA he or she performs. As for the strategy of not performing the FTA, its obvious advantage is that there is no risk of offense to the hearer whatsoever.

Besides the advantages offered by each strategy, Brown and Levinson (1987) state that politeness strategies are also selected according to the weight of an FTA, which is determined by the universal social factors of social distance (D), power (P) and rank of impositions (R). Brown and Levinson (1987) note that the factors are not actual sociological ratings but, in fact, the interlocutors' mutual presumption of such ratings. The numerical values assigned to the factors are based on what the interlocutors assume and believe to be true about the factors; therefore, the values given may not reflect those which are established by sociologists in real life. The factors are also context-dependent, changing when the context changes. It is reported that a rational individual's preference for the higher-numbered politeness strategies increases as the weight of an FTA increases.

The first factor, the social distance between the speaker and the hearer can be measured on the basis of how often they interact and the types of tangible or intangible goods they exchange. The greater the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, the greater the speaker's preference for the higher-numbered politeness strategies. Thomas (1995) claims that people have the tendency of being socially distant



from those who hold greater power. However, she concedes that there are exceptions, citing Aeginitou (1995) who observes that students and teachers in language classrooms share a close relationship regardless of their disparity in power.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) second factor of relative power of the speaker and the hearer can be gauged according to the extent that the hearer can force the speaker to tolerate the hearer's personal ideas and face wants. The greater the power or authority the hearer possesses over the speaker, the greater the speaker's preference for the higher-numbered politeness strategies. Spencer-Oatey (cited in Thomas, 1995) describes three types of power; namely, legitimate power, referent power and expert power. The source of legitimate power is the social or institutional role or status of a person. Besides that, a person could also hold legitimate power because of his or her age. On the other hand, referent power results from being the object of admiration of another person. The person who is admired possesses the referent power over the other person. In the case of expert power, its source is specific know-how that is needed by another person.

As for Brown and Levinson's (1987) third factor, rank of impositions, it could be viewed as how much of an inconvenience the FTA is in the particular culture in which it is performed. The higher the rank of imposition of an FTA, the more the speaker prefers a higher-numbered politeness strategy. Thomas (1995) notes that there is little need for indirectness when requesting for free goods; namely, tangible or intangible goods that can be used by anyone without asking for permission. Conversely, requesting for non-free goods that rank relatively higher on the scale of imposition requires more indirectness. It is also noted by Thomas (1995) that whether specific goods are free or not depends on the relationship between the interlocutors as well as the circumstances surrounding the interaction.

In addition to the factors of social distance, power and rank of impositions, Thomas (1995) believes that indirectness is determined by the rights and obligation of the speaker and the hearer. If the speaker has the right to make a certain request and the hearer has the obligation to comply, the speaker will perform the FTA with minimal indirectness regardless of whether FTA's rank of imposition is high or low.

Thomas (1995) also maintains that indirectness is also determined by the interlocutors' manipulation of pragmatic factors such as power, social distance, rank of imposition as well as rights and obligations. These factors are dynamic because they are not predetermined and they are not always mutually agreed on by both interlocutors. Therefore, directness and indirectness can be used by the speaker to change the hearer's understanding of these factors.

Furthermore, indirectness is used by the speaker because of his or her desire to be interesting (Thomas, 1995). Instead of being direct, a speaker can be indirect to make his or her message more interesting or less interesting according to his or her needs and wants.

Similarly, a speaker utilises indirectness in performing a speech act to increase the impact of his or her message (Thomas, 1995). This is because a message is more impactful or effective if the hearer has to spend more effort and time in comprehending it.

In conclusion, research has shown that politeness and indirectness can be attributed to the benefits afforded by each strategy, social factors including social distance, power, rank of imposition, rights and obligation and psychological factors including manipulation of pragmatic factors, the desire to be interesting and the desire to be impactful. Thus, these factors will be considered in explaining the choice of politeness strategies in classroom directives.

## **2.2 Studies on classroom discourse**

The present study is concerned with directives realised in the context of language classrooms and past studies on the language used by teachers and students in the classroom especially language classrooms will be reviewed.

Heath (1978) describes the language used by teachers as a register with specific characteristics in her study of classroom language focusing on teachers' use of language. Her findings are based on review of other published studies in addition to data collected through classroom observation and ethnographic study, audio recordings of teacher-student spoken discourse, and video recordings of lessons. These data were collected in various grade levels and subject areas of various types of school. She reports that the roles of the teacher as "caregivers" and "arbiters of 'good citizenship' and 'order'" result in classroom language use that is unique (Heath, 1978, pp. 3 & 11). The language used by teachers includes many formulaic linguistic structures with non-literal meanings. For instance, the grammatical structures of interrogatives and declaratives may be used to perform the speech act of directives. Teachers rely on these formulaic structures to achieve their goals of teaching and controlling student behaviour in the classroom. Heath (1978) believes that both teachers and students must be aware of the meanings and intended effects of these formulaic structures for classroom communication to be successful.

When Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) set out to investigate the structures and functions of teacher-student interaction, they discovered that classroom discourse consists of acts, moves, exchanges, transactions and lessons. The data of their study was collected from tape recordings of lessons involving varied schools, subjects and students in terms of age. According to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) findings, acts are the smallest units of discourse. The act of elicitation functions to obtain a verbal response, the act of directive to obtain a non-verbal response and the act of informative

to impart knowledge. Each act is usually but not always performed through the use of specific grammatical structures; namely, elicitation is often realised through interrogatives, directives through imperatives and informatives through declaratives although directives can also be realised via interrogatives, declaratives as well as grammatical structures without moods. Acts comprise the next level of discourse, move of which there are five classes: Framing, Focusing, Opening, Answering, and Follow-up. Moves comprise the following level of discourse, which is exchange. One of the major classes of exchanges, Teaching consists of exchanges such as Teacher Inform, Teacher Direct, Teacher Elicit, Pupil Elicit and Pupil Inform. Teachers use Teacher Inform exchanges to impart information to students, Teacher Direct exchanges to cause students to perform actions, and Teacher Elicit exchanges to cause students to say something. Students use Pupil Elicit exchanges to ask questions and obtain information, and Pupil Inform exchanges to contribute information. Exchanges comprise the subsequent level of discourse, which is transaction. Three types of transactions are commonly found in classroom discourse: Informing transactions, Directing transactions and Eliciting transactions. In Directing transactions, the teacher normally tells students to do work by themselves before students initiate exchanges in the form of Pupil Elicit and Pupil Inform to request for information or offer feedback on their task and request for assessment of their work. Transactions comprise the final and highest level of classroom discourse, lesson. As reported by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), the structure of the lesson generally corresponds to the teacher's teaching plan although it is affected also by the teacher's linguistic performance and student responses.

Another model of classroom discourse is proposed by Sinclair and Brazil (1982). This model, which not only discusses the structure of classroom interaction but also the intonation used, was developed from courses they taught to teachers, Sinclair and

Coulthard's (1975) model of discourse analysis and other research in the area of English language throughout the 1970s. Similar to Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Sinclair and Brazil (1982) too observe that the teacher has the greatest influence on the structure of classroom discourse. Furthermore, Sinclair and Brazil (1982) note that the Initiation-Response-Follow-up moves is a recurrent and distinctive feature of teacher exchanges. For instance, in a Teacher Elicit exchange, the teacher begins with an initiation move followed by students' response and a subsequent evaluation of the response. In addition, Sinclair and Brazil (1982) report that names or titles have a variety of functions depending on their location in classroom discourse. Names or titles could be used by the teacher in exchanges to nominate a student or students to respond, to show familiarity between the teacher and the students, to give warning or to make threats. In student-initiated exchanges, names or titles are usually used to attract the teacher's attention and to cause the teacher to accept an initiation.

In investigating the characteristics of teacher-student discourse in an EFL classroom in Japan, Takakubo (2001) discovered that such discourse is dominated by the teacher. To obtain the data for the study, she tape-recorded and observed a 60-minute EFL class consisting of five 13-year-old male and female students. The data was examined by applying Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) Initiation-Response-Feedback model. The data proved that the teacher initiated most of the teacher-student interaction. In most of the exchanges, the students spoke only in response to the teacher. Takakubo (2001) contends that the occurrence could be explained by the Japanese students' habit of speaking only when their teacher instructs them to, their fear of making mistakes when speaking in English and their poor proficiency in English. She also reports that the teacher often codeswitched from English to Japanese for the purpose of checking comprehension and encouraging students when mistakes were made.

A similar study carried out by Yang (2008) supports Takakubo's finding that teacher-initiated exchanges dominate English language classroom discourse. To study the characteristics of teacher-student interaction in ESL lessons in Hong Kong, Yang (2008) video-recorded English lessons in three junior-secondary-level classes, subsequently transcribing and analysing the interactions by employing the Initiation-Response-Feedback model or discourse analysis. Examination of the data showed that the dominant pattern of interaction began with teachers asking questions, followed by students responding and the teachers giving feedback. The teachers initiated most of the exchanges through eliciting, informing, directing and giving of clues. In fact, there were no student-initiated exchanges at all in one of the three lessons studied. In another lesson, there were cases of the teacher giving several initiations before receiving any response from the students. In one instance, the teacher did not receive any response at all although she provided a number of clues to aid her students in responding to her initiation.

Walsh's (2002) analysis of EFL classroom discourse revealed that directly correcting errors, giving feedback on content, checking for confirmation, lengthening wait-time and scaffolding promote students' language learning whereas completing turns, echoing and interrupting impede the process. The findings of the study are based on data from eight hours of audio recordings of EFL lessons examined utilising Conversational Analysis. It was discovered that direct and minimalist error correction especially in oral fluency practice activities reduces interruption and facilitates learning. Furthermore, use of conversational language when appropriate and feedback on content rather than form also encourages student participation. In addition, learning potential is enhanced when teachers frequently check for confirmation of student comprehension and increase the time allocated for students to answer questions. Finally, students also become more involved in learning when teachers provide scaffolding, which involves

intervening only when needed, offering linguistic support and righting errors. On the contrary, anticipating what students are about to say and completing their turns as well as echoing students' utterances or part of their utterances reduce the frequency and quality of their language output. Moreover, students' learning potential is also hampered by teacher interruptions as interrupting a student results in him or her forgetting what he or she was saying and the lost opportunity of complex language production.

Hayes and Matusov (2005) too looked into factors that promote interaction in dual-language kindergarten classrooms and learned that the conventional Initiation-Response-Feedback discourse structure failed to produce extended conversation between teacher and students. The conclusion was drawn based on a year-long observation of an English-Spanish kindergarten classroom during the period allocated for Spanish. Analysis of the data demonstrated that most of the teacher-student communication began with the teacher's initiation usually in the form of a question to which the answer is known by the teacher, followed by the students' response and the teacher's feedback. When the response given by the students differed from the teacher's expected response, it was rejected. This pattern of discourse was found to be ineffective in sustaining conversation between the teacher and her students because it varies from the characteristics of real-life interaction where a speaker asks a question for the purpose of learning something from the hearer. Conversely, accepting unexpected student response and coordinating the teacher and students' communication goals help to sustain teacher-student conversation.

In short, previous studies on classroom discourse are mostly centred on the forms and features of teacher-student interaction in Western contexts. The present study, in contrast, is concerned with the forms and functions of classroom language used in directing and eliciting in Eastern, in particular, Malaysian contexts. Although common methods of data collection in past studies include classroom observation, video

recording and audio recording, only the last method, in addition to interviewing, is utilised in the current study. The findings of these previous studies on classroom interaction imply that in the present study, teachers will be found to make most of the directives, which are indirect or inexplicit in meaning.

## **2.3 Studies on directives**

Since the present study delves into the realisation of directives, previous studies on directives will be reviewed in the following subsections. The first subsection will look into directives performed in academic contexts while the second subsection will focus on directives performed in non-academic contexts.

### **2.3.1 Directives in academic contexts**

In their description of classroom discourse, Sinclair and Brazil (1982) state that in discourse structure, the act of directive functions to obtain either verbal or non-verbal responses. The grammatical structure of imperative is normally used to perform directives. Nevertheless, a speaker whose status is higher than that of the hearer could utilise declaratives and interrogatives to perform the act of directing in an indirect manner for the purpose of appearing less forceful. Because the syntactic structures of declaratives and interrogatives do not correspond directly with the communicative function of directing, interpretation of the indirectness involved is required on the part of the hearer. Sinclair and Brazil (1982) assert that although teachers can be direct because of their power and authority in the classroom, their use of imperatives to direct is rare. Instead, teachers utilise syntactic structures such as declaratives with embedded infinitive structures and interrogatives with modal verbs to direct students to do things. Imperatives are usually employed to repeat directives and to address pressing discipline issues.



In investigating the realisation of directives in content-and-language-integrated (CLIL) classrooms, Dalton-Puffer (2005) discovered that request strategies used in the classrooms varied according to the purpose of communication. Data was collected in the form of audio recordings of six CLIL lessons, which used English as the medium of instruction, in Austrian secondary schools. The data collected was analysed utilising Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) strategies of request and Trosborg's (1995) types of modification. Analysis of the data revealed that although both teachers and students performed directives in the CLIL classroom, the majority of the directives were performed by teachers. She observes that the degrees of indirectness as well as the strategies of requesting utilised varied according to the communicative purposes of the speakers. When requesting for information, direct strategies were used by both teachers and students while indirect strategies were most frequently used when requesting for goods and actions. She argues that the choice of strategies is influenced by the personal style of the interlocutors and the discourse culture of the interlocutors' first language.

He (2000) contends that teachers' directives transmit cultural values to students in her study of directives used by teachers in American Chinese Heritage Language Schools (CLSs). Her argument is based on data of 10 hours of audio or video recordings of two Chinese language classes in two different CLSs. The classes consisted of male and female students whose ages range from 4.5 to 9 years. He (2000) asserts that there are two types of directives, namely, instructional or initiating directives, which are used to execute classroom procedure and disciplinary or responsive directives, which are used to respond to problematic student behaviour. Instructional or initiating directives are found in the form of discourse markers and imperatives, test questions and imperatives as well as preference or permission statements with modal verbs. On the other hand, disciplinary or responsive directives are formed by orienting students to

their problematic behaviour, evaluating the effects of the behaviour and making a directive that rectifies the behaviour.

Besides studies on directives in general, studies on directives in academic contexts have also focused on specific types of directives, namely, questions. In her study of the types and purposes of questions asked by teachers in the ESL classroom, Ho (2005) challenges the argument that closed or display questions by teachers do not achieve any purpose in the classroom. She collected data from field recordings and field notes of six classroom observations in two private English medium secondary schools and one public English medium secondary school. Ho's (2005) findings indicate that some teacher questions do not fit into the conventional question type categories of open or referential and closed or display. Furthermore, the quality of teacher questions should be gauged according to the purpose of the questions and not the type of questions asked. Her findings also show that the type and purpose of a teacher's question may vary through the course of a question-answer exchange. In addition to that, closed or display questions, conventionally assumed to be pedagogically purposeless are actually purposeful when considering the goal of the educational institution.

Another study of questions in classroom discourse was conducted by Mohammad Umar Farooq (1998), who learned that teachers' usage of referential questions and certain modification techniques encouraged learners to produce the target language in examining EFL teachers' questioning strategies and learners' language production. In the study involving 38 students of a Japanese private women's junior college, a 90-minute class general conversational English class was observed and audio-recorded for 60 minutes. After the data was studied using Holland and Shorthall's (1997) Flint system, he discovered that a primary factor in encouraging learners' language production is the use of referential questions by teachers. Referential questions, according to Richards and Lockhart (cited in Mohammad Umar Farooq, 1998) are

questions that teachers do not know the answers to. Besides referential questions, learners were found to produce the target language when teachers utilised modification techniques of longer wait time, frequent pauses, louder and slow speech, repetition of question, change of question form, modification of vocabulary and stressing of words.

While Mohammad Umar Farooq's study focused only on the types and forms of teacher questions, Camiciottoli's (2007) study involves not only the forms but also function and frequency of teacher questions in the English language by lecturers in spoken lectures and textbook writers in written texts. Her findings are based on data from transcripts of the 12 lectures of the Business Studies Lecture Corpus and three textbooks and online materials from two websites chosen from the Business Studies Written Text Corpus. Camiciottoli's (2007) analysis of the data showed that there is similarity in the number of questions asked in both the spoken lectures and written texts. However, the questions in spoken lectures and the questions in written texts varied in their structure and purpose. Yes/no questions were the most common form of questions in spoken lectures while wh-questions were the most common form of questions in written texts. The majority of questions in spoken lectures were aimed at eliciting response and focusing information whereas the majority of questions in written texts were intended to focus information and stimulating thought. She suggests that the variation in form and function can be explained by the communicative effort and pedagogic goals of the lecturers and text writers.

A study that shares some similarities with Camiciottoli's study is Tan's (2007), which explored the questioning styles of teachers and the response of students in Chinese university EFL classrooms. Like Camiciottoli, Tan examined the frequency, form and function of instructor questions. However, Tan also examined the types of respondents to the questions and the reasons underlying students' reluctance to respond to questions; these aspects were not dealt with in Camiciottoli's study. The data in his

study was collected through classroom observation of nine university English classes, focus group discussions with students and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Tan (2007) reports that all questions in the data were initiated by the teachers with “young” teachers asking more questions than older teachers (p. 91). It is also reported that the type of question most frequently asked were display and lower cognitive questions that were aimed at checking student comprehension and ensuring that learning objectives were met. Although occurring rarely, higher cognitive questions that were designed to stimulate students’ thinking, questions that dealt with discipline and questions that demonstrated the knowledge of the teachers were also asked. Questions were occasionally answered by volunteers, sometimes answered in chorus and most frequently answered by respondents nominated by the teachers. Students were found to be unwilling to answer questions because of fear of making mistakes, inadequate waiting time and the effect of habit.

As a conclusion, previous studies on directives in academic contexts have focused on the forms, functions, effects and respondents of directives especially questions made in English as well as Mandarin Chinese. On the contrary, the present study is interested in the forms and functions of all types of directives including questions realised in the English language. Although directives have been studied within the context of classrooms in Eastern countries such as Japan and Brunei, literature on empirical research of directives within the context of Malaysian ESL classrooms could not be found. Therefore, the current study fills a gap in research as it examines classroom directives within the context of Malaysia. In addition, past studies on academic directives are concentrated in teacher directives with few studies focused on teacher and student directives. The present study is concerned with directives made by both teachers and students. Moreover, the findings of these studies were based on data collected through audio recording, video recording, classroom observation, focus group

discussions and interviewing. However, only the methods of audio recording and interviewing were used to collect data in the present study.

Akin to previous studies on classroom discourse, past studies on academic directives suggest that teachers will be discovered to perform most of the directives found in classroom discourse. Furthermore, the form of these directives will be found to vary according to the communicative intent of the speaker even though the majority of these directives will be indirect. Besides, directives that function to obtain information and to carry out classroom procedures will be direct while those that function to request for goods and action as well as to address disciplinary problems will be indirect.

### **2.3.2 Directives in non-academic contexts**

One of the most significant studies on requests is Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989), which proves that conventional indirectness is the preferred request strategy through research of how requests and apologies are performed across different cultures and languages as well as the social and situational factors that influence their realisation. Data collection involved administering a discourse completion test to native and non-native speakers of American English, Australian English, British English, Canadian English, Danish, German and Hebrew after which the data was analysed using the CCSARP coding manual, which classifies requests according to decreasing degrees of indirectness. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) study provides empirical evidence of conventional indirectness being the "highly favoured requesting option across all languages examined" due to its effective yet safe quality (p. 68). Direct strategies were the second most frequently used strategy followed by non-conventionally indirect strategies.

A subsequent study by Blum-Kulka and House (1989) shows that the choice of request strategy is influenced by obligation, right, dominance, chance and difficulty by

comparing how requests are performed by native speakers of Hebrew, Canadian French, Argentinean Spanish, Australian English and German as well as the factors cultural and situational factors that affect their realisation. Based on the findings of Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) study, additional data for Blum-Kulka and House's (1989) study was collected in the form of native speaker evaluation of social factors surrounding five request situations from the previous study. It was discovered that requests vary according to the situation across all languages studied. It was also discovered that Argentinean Spanish speakers were the most direct followed by Hebrew speakers, French speakers, German speakers and Australian English speakers. Blum-Kulka and House (1989) conclude that the four factors of obligation, right, dominance and chance have a negative relationship with indirectness across all three cultures. The higher the hearer's obligation to comply with the request, the higher the speaker's right to make the request, the higher the speaker's authority over the hearer and the higher the chance for the hearer to comply with the request, the less indirect strategies are preferred in realising the request. On the other hand, the only factor that has a positive relationship with indirectness is difficulty as the higher the difficulty or the greater the effort required in complying with the request, the more indirect strategies are favoured in realising the request.

A study that corroborates the findings by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) and Blum-Kulka and House (1989) is Fukushima's (1996). Her investigation of request strategies in British English and Japanese by native speakers of the respective languages proves that conventional indirectness is highly preferred for requesting and that the difficulty or imposition of a request affects the choice of requesting strategies. Firstly, she collected data in the form of tape recordings of verbal responses to a discourse completion test. By adapting Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) and Sifianou's (1992) methods of analysis, she then analysed the structure of the request sequence,

strategy types, forms and types of head acts and types of supportive moves. Fukushima (1996) learned that only head acts were used to make the low imposition request while head acts were mostly used together with supportive moves for making the high imposition request in both British English and Japanese. The type of head acts used in the British English requests was conventionally indirect strategies alone whereas the Japanese requests comprised of conventionally indirect and direct strategies. Although conventionally indirect strategies were generally more common than direct strategies in the Japanese requests, conventionally indirect strategies were preferred for the high imposition request while direct strategies were favoured for the low imposition request. As for supportive moves, the number of supportive moves utilised increased as the degree of imposition of the request increased even though grounders were most frequently used for both high and low imposition requests in both languages. She concluded that although more conventionally indirect strategies and more supportive moves are used in British English while more direct strategies and less supportive moves are used in Japanese, the preference for more polite strategies increases when the degree of imposition of a request increases in both languages. It is asserted that direct forms are preferred among in-group members of equal status to enhance solidarity in Japanese culture while negative politeness is preferred as distance is prized in British culture.

Felix-Brasdefer's (2005) study also confirms that conventionally indirect strategies are favoured in making requests across languages and cultures. In researching request strategies made by native speakers of Mexican Spanish, he collected data in the form of audio and video recordings of responses by ten Mexican Spanish native speakers to role play request situations. Utilising Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) categories of request strategies, the head acts and supportive moves of the requests were identified and examined. Felix-Brasdefer's (2005) analysis of the data

revealed that conventional indirectness is most preferred in making requests followed by directness and non-conventional indirectness. He surmises that request situations involving a less powerful speaker and more distance between the interlocutors result in the preference of conventional indirectness while request situations involving less distance result in the preference of directness, thus supporting the observation that the factor of power correlates positively with directness (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987) while the factor of social distance correlates positively with indirectness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In addition, analysis of the data also showed that reasons were the most preferred type of supportive moves followed by precursors and positive politeness.

The results of Chen's (2006) study support that of Felix-Brasdefer's (2005). Her study of the perception of requests and factors that affect the preference of request strategies made in English native speakers and non-native speakers and Chinese native speakers revealed that conventional indirectness is highly favoured across the groups studied. Her findings are based on data from scaled response questionnaires and discourse completion tests administered on 90 college students, 30 of whom are native speakers of Chinese, 30 of whom are Chinese learners of English and 30 of whom are native speakers of English. After examining the data with Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) categories of request strategies, Chen (2006) reports that native speakers of Chinese found the request situations to be more imposing and difficult than native speakers of English did. It is also reported that conventional indirectness followed by directness and non-conventional indirectness are collectively favoured by native speakers of Chinese, Chinese learners of English and native speakers of English although native speakers of Chinese and Chinese learners of English favoured more direct strategies than native speakers of English did. Conventionally indirect strategies were more frequently used in high distance situations while direct strategies were more



frequently used in equal status and equal distance situations by native speakers of Chinese than by native speakers of English. In situations with low imposition, status and distance, direct strategies were preferred more by native speakers of Chinese while conventionally indirect strategies were preferred more by native speakers of English. It is argued that the difference in strategy preference is due to culture as status is highly regarded in Chinese collectivist culture while Western individualist culture places equal value on every individual.

Although many studies show that conventional indirectness is highly favoured in requesting, there are studies that prove otherwise. One of them is Aoyama's (2002) study on Japanese request strategies at a Japanese coffee shop, which reports that directness is preferred in making requests. Her study involved transcribing requests made by workers to workers and customers to workers of a coffee shop in Osaka over a two-month period and analysing the collected data through Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) categories of request strategies. In ordering food and beverages, the only type of strategy used by customers was impositives or direct strategies while conventionally indirect strategies were highly preferred in requesting for other services. Because the customers have greater rights to request for food and beverages compared to other services and workers have greater obligation to comply to the requests, Aoyama's (2002) finding confirms Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) and Thomas' (1995) observation that the greater the speaker's right to make a request and the greater the hearer's obligation to comply with the request, the more directness is favoured as a requesting strategy. As for workers' request strategies, the most frequently used type of requesting strategy was impositives or direct strategies followed by conventionally indirect strategies and non-conventionally indirect strategies. Aoyama (2002) notes that variation in requesting strategies could be explained by the factors of

age, status and gender as speakers of older age and higher status favoured more direct strategies while female speakers preferred hints more than male speakers.

Similarly, Skewis's (2003) study of directives used by eighteenth century Chinese men proves the preference for directness in performing directives. Data consisting of 579 directives from the novel *Honglou Meng* was analysed employing Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) classification of request strategies and Brown and Levinson's (1987) factors of power and social distance. It was found that direct strategies especially the mood derivable strategy were highly preferred in issuing directives. Furthermore, increase in the power of the hearer and the distance between the interlocutors resulted in increase in the preference for directness in performing directives; a finding that contradicts Brown and Levinson's (1987) arguments in their politeness theory. However, the increase in the power of the hearer and the distance between the interlocutors did result in the increase of mitigation devices, which were used extensively in the form of lexical and phrasal downgraders, terms of address and supportive moves. Downtoners especially the particle *ba* were the most frequently used type of lexical and phrasal downgraders. As for terms of address, the most common form of self-address was the pronoun *wo* while the most common forms of addressing others were the pronoun *ni* followed by honorifics. Supportive moves, the most common form of mitigation, were most frequently realised as grounders. Skewis (2003) concludes that politeness was achieved not by indirectness but by mitigation in the language and culture of eighteenth century Chinese men.

In summary, these past studies have looked into non-academic directives made in various Western and Eastern languages, situations and environments by both native and non-native speakers of the languages. The focus of these previous studies is the form of directives and the factors that influence them, which is similar to the focus of the present study. On the other hand, data was collected through discourse completion tests,

participant observation and text analysis in these previous researches while data was collected through audio recordings of lessons and interviews in the present one. These past studies show that the factors of culture, right for demanding compliance, obligation for compliance, likelihood of compliance, social distance, power and age were influential in the choice of the form of directives; thus, these factors will be considered in the analysis of data in the current study. Based on the findings of these previous studies, it can be inferred that teacher directives will be observed to be predominantly direct in the present study since teachers are older, more powerful, have the right to expect compliance, and have hearers who are obliged and likely to comply with their directives. It can also be inferred that student directives will be discovered to be predominantly indirect in the present study as students are younger, less powerful, do not always have the right to expect compliance, and have hearers who are not always obliged and likely to comply with their directives. Nevertheless, the majority of teacher and student directives might be found to be direct but softened with mitigating linguistic devices in the current study because these past researches indicate that Asians prefer directness and linguistic modification in expressing directives.

#### **2.4 Studies on politeness**

In light of the purpose of the study, it is also pertinent to examine previous researches in the area of politeness, which will be realised in this section.

Shigemitsu's (2003) study on politeness strategies used in the context of Japanese debates indicates that all types of politeness strategies were used to realise the assertive speech act of disagreement. The findings of the study are based on data from three live debates or discussions in Japanese on Japanese television. Examination of the data using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies revealed that negative politeness strategies including being conventionally indirect, questioning and hedging, minimising

the imposition, giving deference and impersonalising the speaker and the hearer were used to express disagreements in the live debates. It is argued that negative politeness strategies function to preserve harmony and avoid conflict between the interlocutors. As for off record strategies, the only type found in the data was being ironic. This strategy, it is observed, prevented conflict as the speakers' disagreements in the form of ironic expressions were often completely overlooked. Positive politeness strategies found in the data includes noticing and attending to the hearer, seeking agreement and being optimistic. Bald on record disagreements occurred mostly when the speakers were verbally attacked.

Another study on politeness strategies used to realise disagreements was conducted by Liang and Han (2005), who explored the difference in disagreement strategies used by speakers of American English and speakers of Mandarin Chinese and reported that more disagreements were made by Chinese Mandarin speakers than by American English speakers but female Mandarin Chinese speakers used the most politeness strategies in expressing disagreement. The study involved 82 native English speakers studying in American universities and 96 Chinese studying in Chinese universities, whom discourse completion tests were administered on. The data collected was analysed employing Muntigl and Turnbull's (1998) categories of disagreement and Rees-Miller's (2000) categories of politeness strategies for disagreement. Liang and Han note that both the Chinese and American students were more inclined to disagree with superiors and younger siblings than with peers. However, they also mention that the Chinese students showed a much higher preference for address forms to bring up the disagreement than the American students. Furthermore, the Chinese students uttered more contradictory statements and employed more politeness strategies in expressing disagreement with superiors compared to the American students. In disagreeing with peers, the Chinese students uttered less contradictory statements and applied less

politeness strategies while the American students uttered more contradictory statements and applied less politeness strategies as the social distance between the interlocutors increased. In disagreeing with a younger sibling; specifically, a younger sister, the Chinese students were found to use more contradictory statements than the American students but the Chinese females employed the most politeness strategies while the Chinese males employed the least politeness strategies in expressing disagreement. It is surmised that the differences between Chinese disagreement strategies and American disagreement strategies is due to differences in perception of hierarchical status and the difference between East Asian collectivist culture and Western individualist culture.

Besides assertives, studies on politeness strategies have also focused on directives. One such study is Lin's (2005), which investigated politeness strategies used in sales talk by salespeople in Taiwan and confirms the inclination for negative politeness in such persuasive discourse. For the purpose of her study, Lin took field notes or recorded naturally-occurring conversations between 58 salespersons and their customers, and subsequently examined the data by drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. She reports that the strategy used most often by the salespersons was negative politeness strategies. The second most preferred strategy was positive politeness strategies, followed by bald on record strategy. The most highly favoured negative politeness strategy was using hedges especially lexical hedges, syntactical hedges, sentence-final particles and hedges in the form of prosody. Negative politeness was also conveyed through showing deference; namely, usage of the honorific second person singular pronoun *nin*, the verb *baogao* that means "to report", and address terms in the form of professional titles. The third most favoured negative politeness strategy was using indirect strategies including hints, metaphors and rhetorical questions. As for positive politeness strategies, the most highly favoured strategy was showing concern or interest, followed by promising or guaranteeing, expressing solidarity through in-group

talk, giving compliments and joking or using humour. In the case of bald on record strategy, it was most frequently used for disagreements, second most frequently for suggestions and advice, and least frequently for requests and warnings. The choice of politeness strategies are believed to be influenced by the factors of Taiwanese culture and language use, power in the form of age and social status, Chinese collectivist culture, and the nature of sales talk.

Similar to Lin (2005), Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005) delves into politeness strategies used in directives as well as expressives in written political discourse. The data in her study consists of resolutions adopted by UNESCO in 1999. Analysis of the data employing the framework of Leech's illocutionary verbs, Bach and Harnish's (1979) directives and Searle's (1969, 1975) illocutionary acts revealed that negative politeness is utilised in performing the directives in UNESCO resolutions. Negative politeness is achieved through the use of performative declaratives and illocutionary verbs that do not correspond directly with the illocutionary force of directing. In fact, the performative declaratives and illocutionary verbs used adhere to the Tact and Generosity maxims of Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle, which requires reducing the cost and increasing the benefit of the directive to the addressee while increasing the cost and reducing the benefit of the directive to the addressor. Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005) concludes that deliberation in choice of structures in addition to the power relationship between the addressor and addressee are factors that determine the selection of politeness strategies in the directives.

Ruzickova's (2007) study is also concerned with politeness in performing directives, specifically requests. In her study of politeness strategies utilised to make non-conventionally indirect requests or hints in Cuban Spanish, Ruzickova (2007) concludes that positive politeness is very much preferred in making such requests. Her conclusion is based on analysis of data from a corpus of 51 hints collected from

naturalistic conversations in Havana, Cuba utilising Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) positive and negative politeness strategies. A high majority of hints were performed with positive politeness particularly in the form of providing reasons, using in-group language and using in-group address terms. Besides that, positive face redress was also conveyed through the use of diminutives, forms of pronouns and verbs that signal familiarity, tag questions, jokes, terms of address to signal actual or fictional kinship, giving gifts to the hearer, repeating part of the hearer's utterance, noticing the hearer, exaggerating, hedging opinions and using the inclusive pronoun "we". The remainder of the hints were performed with negative politeness specifically in the form of avoiding and hedging the speaker's assumptions about the hearer's ability or willingness to do something, impersonalising the request, minimising the imposition of the request, begging the hearer for forgiveness and using conditional verb forms. Ruzickova (2007) suggests that politeness in Cuban culture is achieved through showing solidarity and concern for the speaker's positive face.

On the other hand, Schallert, Chiang, Park, Jordan, Lee, Cheng, Chu, Lee, Kim and Song (2009) examined politeness strategies employed in the realisation of various speech acts within the context of synchronous and asynchronous online classroom discussions. Their data encompasses transcripts of six discussions involving the teacher and students of a graduate psycholinguistics course in a university. Of the six discussions, three were synchronous and the others asynchronous. Analysis of the data utilising Zhu's (1996) coding scheme for discourse function showed that there are similarities and differences in function between the online messages posted in the synchronous discussions and those in the asynchronous discussions. Further analysis of the data using Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness strategies revealed that positive politeness was generally favoured in the discussions for the purpose of fostering familiarity and solidarity. Schallert et al. (2009) also conclude that the use of

politeness strategies was influenced not by the mode of discussion but by the discourse function of the online messages.

To conclude, these previous researches on politeness have focused on the forms of politeness in addition to their determinants in various speech acts including directives, assertives and expressives, which are realised in various languages including English, Cuban Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese Mandarin, and in various contexts including discussions, sales talk and diplomatic discourse. The data in these researches were collected via video recording, audio recording, participant observation, discourse completion test, text analysis and transcription of online discussions. On the other hand, the current research focuses on the forms of politeness and their determinants in the speech act of directives realised in English within the context of Malaysian ESL classroom discourse. Furthermore, the data for the current study was collected through audio recording and interviewing. According to the findings of these past studies, the use of politeness is affected by the factors of discourse type, discourse function, culture, gender as well as power in the form of social status and age. Hence, these factors will be taken into account in the analysis of data in the present study.