

Abstract

The MA thesis examines the politeness strategies which native speakers and non-native speakers of English employ in written English requests addressed to the faculty. The requests represent by nature the category of Face threatening acts and require a certain level of politeness. The account of politeness is based on the *Face management* theoretical framework by Brown and Levinson (1987). The empirical part compares on-record (positive and negative) and off-record politeness strategies and the level of directness (Blum-Kulka, 1987) comprised in two hundred email messages sent by students of British and Irish, German, and French nationality. The analysis discovered that the nationality/native language is to some extent a determinative feature in the choice of politeness strategies, while the gender of the student influences the level of directness of the request. The Appendix contains the full sample of examined emails.

Keywords politeness theory, face management, request, on-record politeness (negative and positive), off-record politeness, directness of request