

The Politeness Strategies in Classroom Discussion

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ABSTRACT

The following study aims to analyse occurrence of the politeness within male and female students during initial conversation among them during classroom discussions, taking into consideration power and distance. For analysis, the data is drawing from the 30-minute classroom discussions of the students of national university of modern languages. The framework of Brown and Levinson has been applied while analysing data. The examination outline of study has made use of quantitative approach. All the data is quantitatively collected, analysed and then interpreted. The motivation behind utilizing this methodology is that it gave more clarity to our study. Quantitative method is implemented to find out the most per usual politeness strategies, and frequency of positive and negative strategies of politeness, hence revealing drift of the use of these strategies in both genders. The findings of the study give some proof of the reality of a relationship among the two genders and the sort of politeness strategies they use. Although male and female both are concerned in using politeness strategies during their class discussions, they somehow showed variance in execution of strategies. The research shows that females manage to use more negative politeness strategies compare to males whereas male discourse shows more inclination towards the use of positive politeness in the first encounter conversations. The results backed the claim that males mostly use positive politeness strategies, while females use negative politeness strategies.

Keywords: Political discourse, speech genre, Critical discourse analysis, Ideology.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

The subject that attracts sociolinguists' attention the most is conversation analysis. Researchers can comprehend the importance of interlocutors with the help of this analysis. Searle (1979) as

well as Austin (1962) classified discourse acts in to different classes with the specific ruling for everyone. Grice (1964) classified discourse in four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relevance. Later on, Lakoff (1973) abridged this maxim in to two as: Be clear or Be polite. For he believes that these two acts are sufficient for pragmatic competence.

Spolsky (2001, p.19-20) regards politeness in term of identification of listener and her/his right in situation. Almost every language has an explicit formula to exhibit politeness. For example, in English language question is used in an incidental way for requesting such as “could you please pass me the pepper?” or “I guess that’s the pepper beside your plate”. But in Javanese language the social class among speaker and listener will administer the expression used. For instance, the statement “Apa pada slamet?” and “Menapa sami sugeng?” both meaning “Are you well?” but the first statement is addressing a colleague and the second addressing a chief (Ohoiwutun, 1997, p. 87).

Kitao (1987) explained the politeness by requests is discourse technique that a speaker uses to lessen the burden on the listener to carry on the good relationship. Speaker’s familiarity and social status are two major variables that influence relative infliction (Jadoon et al., 2022; Scollon & Scollon, 1983). For example; “If a Speaker plead for a loan of \$80 from a mother and \$30 from a friend; the friend may feel more forced upon than the mother, despite the sort of the request is little; “If Speaker is more powerful than Hearer, the relative size of requests becomes smaller; If a boss and a subordinate ask hearer to do the same thing, Hearer feels more imposed upon by the subordinate than the boss, because the subordinate has less power than Hearer but the boss has more power than Hearer” (Kitao, 1987, p. 04)

Tanaka & Kawade (1982) believed that using strategies mostly relies upon mental and communal connections amongst speaker and listener. It is to believed that Pakistani university students somehow use regular politeness strategies in varying settings. Researcher is interested in whether males and female university student use various politeness techniques in request or not? In order to find the solution to this question researcher conducted the present research.

Politeness strategies are somewhat a new field of pragmatics that has been probed from different perspectives; so, various methods have put forwarded, amongst which Leech’s Principle of Politeness and Levinson and Brown strategies of Politeness are considered more substantial. Cooperative Principle that was suggested by Grice and Pragmatic Competence by Lakoff has a substantial influence on evolution of pragmatic and genesis of prolatenesses; although, they didn’t gain much acceptance. Now a day, Leech as well as Brown and Levinson extemporary approaches applied by linguists, which serve to claim as comprehensive (Watts, 2003, p. 62-63). This notion of the politeness has been practised when interpreting favour, request, gender difference in conversations and compare of their usages in different cultures.

Politeness has become significant aspect in the communications to maintain the communications between the speakers and hearer. Watts (2003) described the politeness in term of “the ability to please others through one’s external actions” (p.39). The rational reasons why peoples need of thinking politeness. Peoples somehow use to get problem or difficulty in

convey their ideas or want to others. There have been aspects that affect ways speaker convey utterance. Those have been educational ethnicity, background, age, gender, power, contexts, and other aspect that may affect the way of speak.

Then, lacks of convey the ideas may ruin the communications. Such as the speaker may hurt feelings of someone else, embarrasses other peoples or make others feel like uncomfortable. Of-course, such communication may not run properly.

Politeness has been related of how peoples talk within certain situations or for whom speakers talk to. The authors Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that the politeness related to “the mitigating device used to mitigate the conflict between the speaker and the hearer” (p. 52). This concern with how’s language express in the appropriate ways for supporting or maintaining the interpersonal relationship. This contains the appropriated linguistic choices in the certain socials and situational contexts. So, politeness strategy is the strategy dealing to politeness as the speakers talk to hearers in orders for maintaining the relationships with hearers. In the researches, the focuses would on verbal aspects of the politeness. Hence the utterance where politeness strategy is produced is very important in this research study.

1.2 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This study will help to clarify the concepts and influence of power and distance in spoken discourse and how they are influencing man and woman politeness strategies. The Research has intimation the theory of politeness in pragmatics and learning the difference between man’s/woman’s discourse. This research study may add the values to the research studies previously conducted on the theory of the politeness. This research study may sort out the differences in between the politeness of the two genders and shall highlight major variations in between the polite attitude of both genders. The recommendations as concluded by this research work shall help in filling the gaps of the type of politeness used by any gender during their verbal conversations.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

Following are the objectives of current Research:

- i. To find-out politeness strategies in men and women spoken discourse.
- ii. To find out the power and distance lean of politeness strategies in men and women spoken discourse.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will investigate the following questions:

- i. How does politeness strategies shape speak discourse of man and woman?
- ii. Which politeness strategies related to power and distance influencing are used by man and woman in spoken discourse?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is conceptual model of how one theorizes or comprehends relationship among a few variables that have been identified critical for the issue. Brown and Levinson models with primary concepts of faces “comprises a great number of strategies, which are used in order to mitigate Face-Threatening Acts to save face. Brown and Levinson have successfully divided all FTAs into on record and off record, further subdividing the former into bald on record i.e., positive and negative politeness acts. This rather complex multi-layer classification allows the analysis of the phenomenon of politeness in greater detail since the distinction between numerous FTAs is drawn, which helps to identify a particular FTA and measure the threat posed to someone’s face more easily. Furthermore, regardless of Brown and Levinson’s claim that positive and negative politeness exclude each other, which is strongly criticised and appears to be false, it is claimed that the very concept of face is applicable to many cultures” [Watts, 2003, p. 63].

This is important that notion of face should be interpreted, which has been key element of entire models of the politeness’ Negative face is “the want of every competent adult member’ that his actions be unimpeded by other” [Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 62]. These are indicating that each person fancies may not to lumber and that her/his entitlement not be obstructed.

Negative courtesy or politeness “is a regressive action that is directly addressed to negative face and is employed in order to minimise the effects of the acts (e.g. requests, suggestions, reminding, that threaten it. Since there is a great number of negative face threatening acts (negative FTAs)” (Brown and Levinson,1987, p. 65-66), Brown and Levinson presented different negative strategies of politeness, which indicates “being direct, not assuming, not coercing, communicating Speaker’s want not to impose upon Hearer, redressing other wants of Hearer’s, thus satisfying Hearer’s want not to be impinged upon” (Brown and Levinson,1987, p. 131).

Negative type of the politeness has been one most successful form of “social distancing”; so, negative type of the politeness strategy used by speaker when it intends to maximize social distances in conversations (Brown and Levinson,1987, p. 130).

Brown & Levinson claimed that the negative type of the politeness is “specific and focused; it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects. In our culture, negative politeness is the most elaborate and the most conventionalised set of linguistic strategies” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.130).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last two decades there has been a thing in linguistic politeness (Watts,2003; Holmes,1995; Hickey & Stewart, 2005). The two most established methods to the politeness have been Leech [1983] Principle of Politeness as well as Brown & Levinson (1987) Politeness Strategic techniques. Both theories offer various methods to the politeness and these approaches administered in various studies; but they have their fair share of criticism on various grounds.

Leech postulates six maxims of politeness in his book, which given as;
a. The Tact Maxim: “Minimize cost to others, maximize the benefit to others.” (Leech,2014, p. 35)
b. Generosity Maxim: “Minimize benefit to self, and maximize cost to self.” (Leech,2014, p. 35) For example;

“You must come and have dinner with us.”

“You relax and let me do the dishes.” (Ran, 2006, p.123)

c. Approbation maxim: “Minimize dispraise of others; maximize praise of others.”(Jewad, 2020, p. 30). This maxim needs to maximise the approval of others and lessen the disapproval. It suggests that everything should be equalized

d. Modesty maxim: “Minimize praise to self and maximize dispraise to self” (Jewad,2020, p:30). In this maxim, speaker should ease off the self-regard and amplify self-censure (Leech, 1983).

e. Agreement Maxim: “Minimize disagreement between self and others; maximize agreement between self and others” (Jewad,2020, p. 30). An example of agreement maxim is shown below.

A: “Linguistics is difficult to learn.”

B: “True, but the phonetics is quite easy.”

C: “That woman has achieved much.” (Ran, 2006, p. 124)

f. The Sympathy Maxim: “Minimize antipathy between self and others; maximize sympathy between self and others.” (Jewad, 2020, p. 30) For instances, “if bad luck or any disastrous event happens to an individual, one must be given sympathy or condolences” (Ran, 2006, p.124).

A: “My father hurt his leg last week and still can’t walk.”

B: “I’m very sorry to hear that.” (polite)

“The limited number of maxims is the main drawback in Leech’s approach, since it is possible to add other maxims, e.g., a patience maxim suggested by Cutting or a consideration maxim proposed by Crus” (Cutting, 2002, p. 51).

Yule considers cultures different in the manner they recognize a polite behaviour. Lakoff (1990), name 3-types of the politeness: deference politeness, distance politeness, and camaraderie politeness. (2010, p. 139-140)

1.Distance politeness is one of the advanced human strategies that is akin to those of animals. Animals form corporal territory markers to point their partners: my soil, be out. Humans use symbols to make symbolic boundaries. Distance politeness shows impartiality among members.

2.Deferential Politeness is acquired by a culture that averts the risk of dispute. Dispute can be averted if a member believe that whatsoever is uttered and whatsoever it intends in a chat is devising the other person. It is a desirable model in most societies for women while interacting especially when speaking to men.

3. Camaraderie reveals that interaction and relation are positive ideas socially and the fairness is the most remarkable gesture of courtesy. According to this system, to be fair and fine is to be welcome and appealing. (Mansoor, 2018, p.170)

“For me, some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words who’s meaning implicitly involves fuzziness- words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. I will prefer these words as ‘hedges.’” Lakoff (1972, p.471) He adds “... (for hedges) any adequate treatment will have to take context into account.” (1972, p. 147) “Hedges are a group of words whose functions are to conduct communication; the communicative function of words cannot work without context”. (Tang, 2013, p.157)

Politeness is the key concept of study in analyses comprising favour, request and gender difference such as Goldschmidt [1998] articles on favours asking where he focuses on “the choices people make when asking and responding to favours in terms of their rights and obligations to one another, thus fitting neatly into pragmatics as a function of communication.”(Goldschmidt, 1998, p. 129) Macaulay’s (2001) research on indirectness and gender in requests on interviewers concludes that “while the male interviewers favour indirect forms that foster atonement, the female interviewers favour indirect forms that engage their interviewees analytically.”(Macaulay, 2001, p. 293) Hobbs (2003) researches on gender’s difference in the voice mail message, served to elaborate that, “even in the relatively impolite world of a personal injury litigation practice, both male and female speakers make frequent use of politeness strategies, thus softening the edges of the perennial ‘war of words’ in which lawyers are mutually engaged.”(Hobbs, 2003, p. 261) Holmes thorough analysis of male and female politeness explains that “women and men use different discourse strategies (interruption, questions, pragmatic particles, hedges, compliments and apologies, etc.) and that, in general, women’s linguistic behaviour can be characterized as more polite than men.”(Freed, 1995, p.395) On the grounds of present research it is important to mention that politeness gets much attention in cross-cultural studies, where to chart contrasts in varying cultures the scholars use the notions of faces.

Brown & Levinson (1987) states the “politeness is based on notion of face, threatening acts which threaten another person face so person should be careful about such acts that may threaten other's face”. Reiter in his book shares Brown & Levinson’s division of politeness that assumes that “all competent adult members of a society are concerned about their ‘face’, the

self-image they present to others, and that they recognize other people have similar ‘face’ wants.” (Reiter, 2000, p.12) Following Brown & Levinson “face has two aspects” which are universal: “positive face” and “negative face”. “Positive face”, is “fundamentally determined by the culture and by the social group to which the participant belongs; it is ultimately of an idiosyncratic nature”. ‘Negative face’, “is a person’s desire to be unimpeded by others, to be free to act without being imposed upon.”(Reiter, 2000, p.12) ‘Face’, they assert, is “something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly intended to in interaction.”(Levinson, 1978, p.66)

Brown and Levinson contend that elements that affects the face-threatening involves variable like “the social distance between the participants, the power that the addressee has over the speaker, and the ranking of the imposition expressed in the utterance in the relevant culture” (Tang, 2013, p. 157). Brown & Levinson suggest few strategies which can lessen the gravity of face-threatening action. (1987, p. 65)

- Bald on-record: These strategies try not to give reasons to the danger to the face of the hearer, though in some ways it does try to lessen face-threatening actions silently.
- Positive politeness: It intends to extenuate the danger to the positive face of the hearer. It is used to boost the self-esteem of the hearer.
- Negative type of politeness: This strategy channelled to defend negative faces of hearers and directs for averting the lofty opinions on the listener.
- Off-record: “This strategy uses indirect language and abolish the speaker from the prospect of imposing”. (Tang, 2013, p. 157)

Factors Affecting the Characters’ Politeness

This study is also analysing the factor that affect the politeness. This study employs the theory related to Spolsky (1998) on the factor that affects the politeness. As per Spolsky (1998), various language styles, registers and domains, slangs and solidarities, and languages and genders that use to determine the usage of languages in the speaking the politeness. The explanations of every factors are described in ensuing paragraphs.

a) Language Styles

In communications, people usually aware of the hearers. They may choose either to speak in formal or informal way as per the person with whom talking. Spolsky (1998) stated that peoples may consciously select how they should use the language through application of the informal or formal expression to peoples to whom they are addressing. Furthers, he stated that peoples engaged in the favouring and educating norms of the society as they are speaking formally because they thus able of speaking appropriately.

b) Registers and Domains

Spolsky (1998) emphasized that peoples with particular occupations may develop term for the newer concept. Peoples who are working at the hospitals shall be distinct from peoples who are working at the super market in term of languages. Each occupation shall develop the term which might not familiar for peoples who don't work at same places. Hence register related to the varieties of languages involving role and status, which used within certain situations. The others key for determining politeness to speak are social situations. Spolsky (1998) said that it is observed typical domains which define the ways people use to speak in term of social situations. Furthers, he stated that domain is named normally for the places or the activities in them. Two (2) commonly known domains related to the work and home.

c) Slangs and Solidarities

Spolsky (1998) mentioned that slangs are used in term of the special kind of the intimates or in-group speeches. Slang having social function as the signs of identities, membership as well as solidarity amongst peoples whom using. Furthers, Spolsky (1998) explained that the solidarity having major impacts on the languages. Peoples tend in showing group solidarities to other by applying same languages used, like accents or words choices. These factors have the goals of intimating both hearer and speaker.

The significance of languages in the established social identities are shown in case of the slangs. Slanging has been kind of the jargons marked by their rejection of the formal rule and their marked uses in claiming solidarity. Slanging regularly transgress other norms of the society, making freely uses of the taboo expression.

d.) Languages and the Gender

Spolsky (1998) stated that both women and men share difference in the vocabulary used. Because for child, they are tending to pick the men's and women's talk as per the social stereotype. They also assume the women's talks having something of doing with the domestic and home activities, while men's talks are associated to world outside and related to the economic events.

METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The examination outline of study has made use of quantitative approach. All the data is quantitatively collected, analyzed and then interpreted. The motivation behind utilizing this methodology is that it gave more clarity to our study.

4.2.2 RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach used within the research has been quantitative approach. All the data is quantitatively collected and analysed.

4.2.3 DATA FOR ANALYSIS

For the research, the data has been taken from the 30 minutes' classroom discussion of a co-university National University of modern languages. Data comprised of spoken discourse of

male and female students. Students were discussing about the current and future condition of class performance and parental influence on their lives.

Quantitative method is implemented to find out the most per usual politeness strategies, and frequency of positive and negative strategies of politeness, hence revealing drift of the use of these strategies in both genders.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

In the female discourse data 46 strategies regarding negative type of the politeness have noted, which form major part of general numbers of the strategies applied in discourse. It appears hedging is the most commonly used strategy considering 24 instances out of 46 for almost all the female use this type of strategy for various reasons. The scholars Brown & Levinson (1987, p.145) defined the hedges as follow:

“[...] a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of the membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected”.

Mostly females use hedges as a form of hesitations, where they try to say few things indirectly. These types of hedges may employ to further explain the matter that has already been said as in the following example

1. Err, what?
2. Err, all right. (showing agreement as in)
3. Err, Yes. (showing agreement as in)
4. Er, no. (softening disagreement)
5. “By the way, he introduced me as Naina but actually everyone calls me Noor.
6. Stepmom, actually” [Brinton,2004, p.98].

‘Actually’ here perform the functions of hedge which has 2 aspects: “contrastive and emphatic” [Brinton, 2004, p.98].

Here in a contrastive aspect, the female conveys the disapproval between what just said and what’s going to say. On others hand, in six, she gives explanation to situations and amend her answers by using firm actually.

Also, strategy of showing respect, by using ‘sir’ is found within several utterance. The strategy shows that the listener is in a better social statuses than the speaker, whom are trying to humble himself/herself:

- Morning, sir

- Yes, sir
- Please-sir, please

In further analyses of discourse, the negative type of politeness strategies which help to clear female want to say something straight yet correct this want, i.e., being conventional & oblique, has found. Thus, “the utterance is on record, while F shows his intent to go off record” [Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.132]. For instance:

7. I'd like water, please.
8. Could we quite quicker, please?

In the strategy different words/phrases used, but in compilation there only one or two examples, most of that given out above. By 7th phrase, it would like is followed by “please”, that function as parts of strategy is being conventional obliques. In the example the speaker shows her intention and go off record rather than stating her desire straight. Moreover, in the latter utterance the speaker conveys point with high degrees of allusiveness, by use of both please and could.

Male's positive politeness in following utterances:

- All of you have done a perfect job.
- May be the whole class is not willing to work under my supervision.
- I don't know the real problem.
- Would you like to work with me?
- Talking about parental pressure, I think we are all familiar to this.

The findings of the study give some proof of the reality of a relationship among the two genders and the sort of politeness strategies they use. Although male and female both are concerned in using politeness strategies during their class discussions, they somehow showed variance in execution of strategies. The findings of study shows that females students are tactful in using politer strategy, whereas male teacher use strategies like partial agreements, uncertainty marker e.g., “may be”, “I don't know” etc. Female students try to keep down the dissent more than the male student. It is found that males are straight in conveying ideas compare to female students. They convey their dissent in an undeviating way and don't use positive assertions to bring in warning to the face of their dialogist.

CONCLUSION/SUGGESTIONS

The research shows that females manage to use more negative politeness strategies compare to males whereas male discourse shows more inclination towards the use of positive politeness in the first encounter conversations.

Nonetheless, the present study has been confined to the analysis of 30-minute conversation only. Furthermore, the limited scopes of the papers restrict the thorough analyses of combination to conduct.

There have still been some questions which would requiring further researches, e.g., this would important of seeing the distributions of the strategies in other situation (like job interview and asking, etc.) and comparing other language, and investigating the frequencies and few particular inclinations of different combinations of the strategic politeness.

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Appendix A

Speech's Transcription

1M: "I want to talk to you about a personal issue and I wanted to find out specifically how what I could do to help myself be considered next time"

2F: "can I just grab that phone"

I'd like water, please.

3F: sorry about that

2F: Erm, yes.

2M: "that's okay":

"it's part of the life"

2F: Could we be quite quick, please?

1F: By the way, he introduced me as Nanina but actually everyone calls me Noor.

3M: “ I just want to talk to you about it and and i suppose [swallows] [tut] i just want to get some ideas on what i could do to actually be considered favourably next time”

1F: stepmom, actually.

3M: Talking about the parental pressure, I think we all are familiar with this.

2F: “yeah i don’t think it’s a it’s a question of er favourability”

1M: Would you like to work with me?

2M: I don’t know the real problem.

1M: “um I was urgent need of someone to fill in and my mom had done that in the past already”

3M: “it wasn’t based on an asse- on an assessment of your capabilities () from my point of view it was simply logistics and what was practically easy that would create the least amount of hassles at that point in time”

1M: “you know Raza hadn’t declared who he wanting acting (up) or if indeed he wanted it”

2M: “I suppose it’s because um joseph hadn’t really talked to me beforehand why he’d chosen”

3F: “er: you know obviously he’s been working in regional councils and things like”

1M: May be whole class is not willing to work under my supervision.

2M: “but I didn’t make any judgements of that sort”

2F: “I think for me it was simply going on what was the safest ground”

1F: Er, no.

1M: no no but that that basically was my relation and “I wanted you to sort of look more closely at it from the point of view of opportunities for me as well”

3M: “I don’t get considered next time and basically otherwise i don’t see myself moving much if I don’t get any experience myself”

3F: Not really, Zeshan.

1F: No, no, really, it wasn’t.

2F: “if there was anything I could do just to- just to um develop my own ability to be able to like that yeah I think that’s I think that’s a fair comment”

3F: “well I think you made a um important point that you’ve actually said that yeah i mean it was a you know it wasn’t for extended a period of time but you know um i would’ve been quite happy”

1M: right yeah i see

1F: is there a- anything oh well we can keep on going

3M: “next time it happens and if it does happen again then yeah sure no difficulties”

1M: “all right then oh good”

2M: “okay”?

1M: All of you have done a perfect job. Thanks