A Socio-linguistic Survey on Females' Politeness Strategies in the Same Gender and in the Cross-Gender Relationship

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Abstract

Politeness is a phenomenon which is common to all cultures. Each culture has a different perception of what is polite and each language has various devices for expressing politeness. One of the important aspects of politeness which is the central focus of many studies is the polite behaviors of men and women. The focus of this study is on the politeness strategies of males and females from different aspects. The central aim of this paper is to examine the impact of gender on the politeness strategies of the speakers to see whether females speak more politely to females than to males or not. Therefore, a questionnaire was designed based on Discourse Completion Test which is originally developed for comparing different speech act realization patterns. The questionnaire was distributed to 30 females and 30 males. The result indicated that generally women speak more politely to women than to men; however, males speak more politely to females than to males. Therefore, it can be concluded that the gender of the listener is an important factor on politeness behaviors of the speakers.

Keywords: Politeness, Gender, Politeness Behaviors of Males and Females

1. Introduction

Politeness is a social behavior common to all cultures. It is a major element of every day interaction. The politeness concept can be studied linguistically (verbally) or nonlinguistically (non-verbally). The focus of this study is linguistic politeness that is the way of being polite to others by the use of language. Understanding people's polite ways of talking can be a great help to the communication gap between women and men and a giant step towards opening lines of communication.

According to Grundy (2000), politeness is "the term we use to describe the extent to which actions, including the way things are said, match addressees' perceptions of how they should be performed," (cited in bloomer, Griffiths & Merrison, 2005, p. 111). Yule (2006, p. 119) also defined it as "showing awareness of and consideration for another person's face." Hill et al. (1986) along the same line, defined politeness as "one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others' feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport" (cited in watts 2003, p. 51).

Watts (2003) defined linguistic politeness as "an abstract term referring to a wide variety of social strategies for constructing and reproducing cooperative social interaction across cultures" (p. 47). Linguistic politeness has been the area of extensive research since the works of Lakoff in the 1970s and those of brown and Levinson in the 1980s. According to Lakoff (2004), politeness linguistically is concerned with verbal communication and nonlinguistically is concerned with other aspects of communication such as body language. Brown and Levinson (1087) have been amongst the pioneers of linguistic politeness research for 20 years. Their studies into politeness were concerned with the concept of face taken from Goffman (1967), the image that a speaker or hearer would like to maintain during the course of an interaction.

The study on the politeness and its relationship with gender, i.e., polite behaviors of men and women, is one of the most important research subjects in linguistics. One of the influential models of politeness which tries to determine factors of polite behaviors of men and women is that of Brown and Levinson (1987). In spite of the fact that Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness has received many criticisms, It is one of the most wildly used models of politeness.

1.1. Politeness and Gender

The relation between language, gender and politeness has been the interests of many sociolinguists. Lakoff (1973) is renowned for her works on language and gender. She called attention to the differences between the speech of men and women. Her claim inspired many scholars to do investigations in this field. Although the term gender refers to a male – female distinction, it is a social concept, discussed in the field of sociolinguistics.

According to Segal (2004, p. 3) "gender is taken to refer to a culturally based complex of norms, values and behaviors that a particular culture assigns to one biological sex or another." Concerning the relation between gender and politeness, many investigations have been done; amongst them are the works of Lakoff (1975), Brown and Levinson (1987) and Montgomery (1998).

According to Lakoff (1975), women's speech seems more polite than men's. He claimed that men are taught to speak more politely with women than with other men. Women's language style is characterized by the use of elements such as "hedges, tentativeness, tag questions which show indirectness, mitigation and hesitation" and male speech is characterized as "direct, forceful, confident using features such as direct, unmitigated statements and interpretation" (cited in Mills, p.165). Montgomery (1998) also claimed that

both male and female speakers use polite language when speaking to women. On the whole investigations show that females are often marked for using more polite structures than men. These beliefs have been challenged by some researchers. One of the opponents of such research and findings is Sara Mills.

Mills (2003) believed that such judgments are just personal assessments. It seems that societies have changed and the relation between men and women is not the same as in the past. There are women who speak roughly and rudely to men and vice versa. Mills (2003) argued that certain practices that are considered to be polite are in fact "stereotypically gendered" and not based on the truth (p. 202).

Many investigations on politeness and gender done on European countries show that women are more polite than men; however, politeness strategies are different in cultures so, it is better to be examined culturally. Every individual in a society is a complex of certain characteristics and experiences and often it is not easy to determine factors of language in behaviors.

1.2. Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness

One of the important and influential models of politeness that is based on Grice's cooperative principles and Goffman's idea of face refers to Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987). Face is defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1955, cited in Mills, 2003. p. 213).

The concept of face is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself and that people cooperate in maintaining face in an interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1978 cited in Yuka 2009, p. 59). Face is a concept that should be paid attention in interactions. Everyone in a society has potentially a face.

Face is divided into two separate, but related aspects. Positive face is "the positive and consistent image people have of themselves and their desires for approval" while negative face is "the basic claim to territories, personal pressure and rights to non-distraction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). Behaviors such as avoiding telephoning a teacher early on a Friday morning or apologizing for interrupting a speaker are expressions of negative politeness, while buying a gift for a friend or calling a child my sweetie are expressions of positive politeness.

Generally, face is very vulnerable and during a conversation, it can be lost, maintained or enhanced. Interlocutors must maintain not only one's own face but the face of others. In daily interactions people may do actions that threaten others faces, these are called face threatening acts (FTA). Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed four FATs:

1. Acts which threaten the audience's negative face: Advising, ordering, threatening, warning;

2. Acts which threaten the audience's positive face: Complaining, criticizing;

3. Acts which threaten speaker's positive face: Apologizing, accepting, complimenting and confessing;

4. Acts which threaten speaker's negative face: Accepting an offer, accepting thanks, promising unwillingly. (p.74)

There are some strategies to reduce FTA in interactions. They are called linguistic politeness. The use of these politeness strategies depends on three social variables:

 1. Difference between the power of the speaker and the listener

 2. The social distance between them

3. The cultural ranking of the speech acts (how threatening or dangerous it is in a specific culture).

Based on these variables, speakers select a specific strategy to minimize FTA. These strategies according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness are as follow:

1. Bald on record: This strategy is used when people know each other so there is no need to maintain face. For example, if someone sees a person in danger may shout "be careful" or a mother may tell to her child "eat your food". This strategy can be threatening if it is out of context.

2. Off record: This strategy is more indirect. Speakers do not impose something on the listeners, so the face is not directly threatened. So it is necessary for the listener to interpret what the speaker is saying. For example, if person A wanted to borrow person B's math book and said "I have an exam tomorrow, but I have lost my math book" she would be going off record, because there is no explicit request. If person A said "may I borrow your math book tomorrow" she would be going on record, because the request is unambiguous.

3. Positive politeness: This strategy tries to minimize the threat to the audience's positive face. This can be done by attending to the audience's needs, feeling of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness.

4. Negative politeness: This strategy tries to minimize threat to the interlocutor's negative face. For example, suppose a speaker requests something from a listener but wants to maintain the listener's right to refuse. This can be done by being indirect.

   - *May you lend me your pen?*

This indirect request in question form gives the opportunity to the listener to say no. this response is very different than saying no to a direct imperative sentence.

Over the years, many aspects of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory have been examined, challenged or modified. Some researchers (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1993, 1994; Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003) have criticized this theory. The critics target its neglect of impoliteness. They claimed that the theory referred to different norms of politeness yet paid no attention to impoliteness. However, Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that they have never claimed to devise a framework for impoliteness.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of universal politeness strategies have been questioned by many researchers. Elen (2001) argued that "the notion of politeness differs from culture to culture and that cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ not only from one language to another but also from one regional and social variety to another" (cited in Elsufi Hamed, 2014, p. 28).

Some critics claimed that the modal was based on Western cultures therefore it is not applicable to Asian cultures. Asian culture is a collectivist culture whose members are defined based on the social group they belong to. Watts (2003) stated that "in all human cultures, we will meet forms of social behavior that we can classify as culturally specific forms of consideration" (p. 30). Despite all the criticisms, due to the applicability and universality of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, it is still one of the most widely used models of politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that although the politeness concept is universal, there are some features of that which are culture specific. This theory explicitly determines rules and principles of politeness which are applicable in every research.

1.3. Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

The DCT is one of the most commonly used data collection instruments, because of its arbitrary nature of the actions of the situations and the use of the written responses to investigate oral language. The discourse completion test (DCT) was originally developed for comparing different speech act realization patterns. The DCT had been and continue to be used to elicit speech act data in different languages (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Olshtain, 1983; Uliss-Weltz, 1990). There are two forms of the DCT: discourse completion test which is an open questionnaire providing scenarios and a classic dialog completion task.

It is worth mentioning that some critics consider the DCT inappropriate for collecting the data on politeness strategies. They think that people in this kind of questionnaires do not show their real intentions. Yong Rofidah (2011) in his research claimed that "man-made situations can never account for real life encounters, only naturally occurring data can truly show the complexities of politeness phenomena in its natural setting" (p. 1).

Mills (2003) refers to other ways of collecting the data like interviews, anecdotes and role plays. However, there are no other sociolinguistic data collection instruments that have as many administrative advantages as the DCT. Furthermore, a better understanding of communication in such a constructed context may help us gain a better understanding of authentic communication. It seems that collecting naturally occurring data in real life environment free from pressure which the participants could show their real intentions is impossible.

Rofidah (2011) in his research on norms of politeness in the classroom challenged the data collection through DCT and claimed that "the data provided by this method are people's conscious evaluation of politeness usually expressed in short phrases or sentences devoid of context" (p. 3). He made use

of observation and recording for collecting the data. In this method a researcher as observer stands in the corner of the class and video records the teacher's speech and student's performances in order to elicit the politeness strategies of the teacher and the students. However, in this kind of data collection, the true and real information cannot be obtained, because there is no guarantee that the subjects against the video recorder show their true intentions.

Up to now the DCT has been widely used by many researchers. It cannot be ignored that the DCT has several important advantages. Nurani (2009) in his paper referred to this issue and claimed that the DCT allows researchers to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short time. Furthermore, it creates model responses which are likely to occur in spontaneous speech. The DCT also provides stereotypical responses for a socially appropriate response. Applying multi instruments of data collection in a study, for example using interview along with a questionnaire, will also enhance the quality of the data as well as the study.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Politeness is one of the most well–known branches of pragmatics. Different models of linguistic politeness have been proposed starting from Lakoff (1973) to Leech (1983). Based on these models a vast number of investigations have been accomplished. According to Fraser (1999), over 1000 books, papers and articles have been published on the concept of politeness.

Lakoff (1973) was one of the first linguists who has studied politeness and introduced it as one of the important aspect of interactions. According to Lakoff's (1973) theory of politeness, there are two rules of politeness which aim at minimizing conflict in an interaction.

1. Be clear (based on Grice cooperative maxims)

2. Be polite (do not impose, give options and make others feel good).

It is claimed that Lakoff's (1973) politeness model has a weak theoretical background. She did not give an explicit definition of politeness. Concerning the relation between politeness and gender, Lakoff (1973) aroused researchers' interests in the issue of language and sex. She called attention to the differences between the speech of men and women. Lakoff (2004) in a book named *language and women's place*, introduced many characteristics of women's speech including the claim that men are thought to speak more politely with women than with other men. Lakoff (2004) claimed that men's and women's talk is a socialization process. Society makes women to speak the way they do.

There are some other theorists (Fraser & Nolen, 1990; Watts, 2003; Mills, 2003) who have introduced a new concept of politeness. Watts (2003) distinguished between what is polite and what is impolite, placing the two terms on a continuum, introducing a new concept named "politic behavior". Politic behavior is a "linguistic behavior which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction" (Watts, 2003, p. 19). "The appropriate behavior is between polite and impolite behavior and it is called politic behavior" (p. 30). Watts (2003) emphasized the contested nature of politeness norms in traditional models. He claimed that polite behavior differs from one person to the next and from one situation to the next. With regard to the polite behaviors of men and women, Mills (2003) challenged the idea that women are always more polite than men. She argued that although there are situations when women appear to be more polite than men, there are many occasions where women act as impolitely as men. According to Mills (2003), one cannot simply determine which items or strategies are polite or impolite. It

is only participants in an interaction who can judge which strategy is polite or impolite.

Montgomery (1998) also believed that both male and female speakers use polite language when speaking to women. However, it is not clear whether or not there are the same in other cultures. The findings of Montgomery (1998) provide evidence for the relationship of politeness and gender in the south of the United States.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also developed one of the important and influential theories of politeness. Many studies and investigations about politeness are based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. The basic concept of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness is that politeness in any culture is established based on a limited number of universal phenomena. They claimed that the application of politeness strategies is universal and they are not different across languages and cultures. Their claim of universality has received many criticisms; therefore, there is a need to investigate politeness strategies of men and women across different cultures. It is worth mentioning that despite considerable criticism against Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the theory is still one of the most important and productive model of politeness in research.

Geoffrey Leech (1983) introduced a model of politeness based on Grice's cooperative principles. Leech (1983) claimed that his model of politeness is not applicable to all cultures in equal measures. His theory of politeness lacks an explicit definition of politeness. Holmes (1995) defined politeness as "a behavior which actively expresses positive concern for others as well as non-imposing distancing behavior" (p. 5). According to Holmes (1995) politeness is a distancing and solidarity building practice. Holmes approaches of politeness agrees with Brown and Levinson (1987) notion of face saving act. He believed

that women tend to be more polite than men. According to Holmes (1995), "women are much more likely than men to express positive politeness or friendliness in the way they use language" (p. 6).

In the area of politeness research, the impact of gender on the politeness behaviors of the speakers has attracted a large amount of attention. Hang (2009) investigated politeness strategies among the same and the cross gender conversations among Hong Kong young generations. The aim was to find out the effect of gender on the politeness behaviors of men and women. The result showed that the gender of the listener is an important factor on the politeness strategies of the speakers and on the whole, women speak more politely to women than to men.

Navratilova (1993) had a study on politeness strategies by American English speakers and Chinese speakers in complimenting. He followed Leech's theory of politeness in his study. Navratilova (1993) came to this conclusion that the American English speakers' strategies are motivated by Leech's agreement maxim, whereas the Chinese speakers' strategies are motivated by his modesty maxim and this is because of the difference in the social values of the two groups.

Hefner (1988) also explored the relation between the status of Javanese women and the politeness and formality of their speeches. The author claimed that speech patterns are related to some socio-structural variables: patterns of socialization, models of appropriate male and female linguistic behavior and men's and women's social rules. Hefner (1988) by considering these variables in the behaviors of Javanese women came to this conclusion that women speak more politely than men as an expression of their secondary status.

Brown (1980) studied women's politeness behaviors on Mayan community. He claimed that generally it is believed that women speak more formally and

more politely, but there are some disagreements to this generalization. Brown (1980) challenged the studies which tried to determine characteristics of gender speeches, because the features which distinguish women's and men's speeches are just a collection of random linguistic facts. According to Brown (1980) there are no rational choices behind some rules in the behaviors of women, because they are laid down by the society. There should be a relation between characteristics of women's speech and sociological factors. Brown (1980) in his research analyzed women's and men's speech in Tenejapa, a community of Mayan Indians in Mexico, and came to this conclusion that women in that society are more sensitive to possibly face threatening materials in their speeches. They are positively and negatively polite to women as well as men and this result contradicts his initial hypothesis that women are positively polite to women and negatively polite to men.

In relation to the investigation of politeness phenomenon in Persian, the literature suffers shortage of research on politeness strategies and its relation with gender. Most of the studies are dedicated to the politeness phenomenon on the whole and some of them explore the relation of politeness with power or gender. For example, Akbari (2002) explored the range of politeness strategies (positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record politeness) in Persian and compared these strategies used by Persian monolingual speakers with those in English. She did not find so much significant differences between the two groups. Rastegar (2000) in her paper explored the definability of the politeness concept from different approaches. She attempted to show that the confusion is inherent in the concept of the politeness. Generally, a research concerning politeness strategies of men and women in Persian that is worth mentioning was not found. On the whole, there is a need to investigate

linguistic politeness across different cultures in order to determine politeness strategies of men and women.

3. Research Questions

The study investigates the following questions:

• Do females speak more politely to females than to males?

• Is there any relationship between the gender of the listeners and politeness behaviors of the speakers?

• Is there any relationship between politeness behaviors of the speakers and the social distance of the listeners?

4. Method

4.1. Participants

30 females and 30 males aged between 19 and 26 from Razi University in Kermanshah city were randomly selected.

The participants are native speakers of Kermanshah with different family and socio-economical backgrounds.

4.2. Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a discourse completion test (DCT) originally developed for comparing different speech act realization patterns. DCT had been and continue to be used to elicit speech act data in different languages (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Olshtain, 1983; Uliss-Weltz, 1990). There are two forms of the DCT: discourse completion test which is an open questionnaire providing scenarios and a classic dialog completion task. In this

study, the participants were divided into two main categories. One is the female group and the other is the male group. Then, under each group, three performative speech acts of complaining, apologizing and comforting others among friends and strangers were analyzed. Therefore, the DCT contains 9 situations that are considered common in daily life.

In every situation, the participants should provide two types of responses. They should respond to the same gender and the cross-gender. In order to examine the relationship between politeness behaviors of the speakers and the social distance of the listeners, each part is set to respond to friends and strangers.

4.3. Procedure

In each situation described in the questionnaire, the participants are asked to write down their responses verbally or nonverbally. There is no time limit. They can answer the questionnaire at home.

4.4. The Design of the Questionnaire
4.4.1. Situations

The questionnaire contains 9 situations in 3 topics:

Topic 1: (situation1-4) Situation in which someone makes the speaker unhappy.

Situation 1: A friend forgot to bring his or her friend's lunch card.

Situation 2: A friend failed to keep the promise.

Situation 3: Some stranger pushed over the participants.

Situation 4: A sales person sold out a mobile phone without the participant's permission.

Situations 1 to 4 are designed to see whether the participants will make complaint or not. How would they complain? Is there any swear word?

Topic 2: (situations5-7) Situation in which the participants upset/offend others.

Situation 5: Participant damaged his or her friend's book.

Situation 6: Participant's food fell over on a stranger.

Situation 7: Participant stepped on a stranger.

Speakers on these situations may accidentally do something that hurt or offend others. The aim is to see whether the participants would apologize and if so, how?

Topic 3: (Situation 8-9) Situation in which the participants give comfort to others.

Situation 8: A friend failed his/ her public examination.

Situation 9: A friend lost his/ her beloved things.

In these situations, the participant's friend is very upset and seeks for comfort. The aim is to see whether the participants show sympathy and understanding and how they would comfort their friends.

5. Results and Discussion

In this part, the data compiled through the questionnaire are presented in tables. There are three tables; each is about one of the speech acts of complaining, apologizing and comforting others. In each of these speech acts, it is important to see (1) whether there are differences in politeness behaviors of female participants to same and cross-gender of listeners. (2) Whether there are differences in politeness behaviors of female participants to their friends and strangers. The male participants will be analyzed as the same either.

5.1. Politeness Behaviors of Female Participants

Table1. Percentages of Politeness Strategies of Females in Situations 1 to 4 (Complaining)

Make complaints	Responses	Situation1		Situation2		Situation3		Situation4	
		To friends				To strangers			
Degree of politeness:1is more polite, 3 is less polite		F to F	F to M	F to F	F to M	F to F	F to M	F to F	F to M
The degree of politeness:	warning with a smile	16%	---	43%	26%	56%	20%	---	---
	becoming angry and taunting	10%	16%	13%	10%	16%	16%	26%	33%
1 is more polite	scolding, fighting	13%	36%	10%	20%	3%	13%	73%	66%
4 is less polite	swearing	---	10%	13%	33%	6%	10%	---	---
Making complaint with body language	frowning on	13%	16%	---	6%	3%	16%	---	---
Without making complaints	never mind no response	46%	23%	20%	3%	13%	23%	---	---

5.1.1. Politeness Behaviors of Female Participants When Complaining to the Same and Cross- Gender of Listeners (friends and strangers)

Situations 1 to 4 are about somebody who makes the participants angry or upset. It is important to see how females complain about a female or a male person (their friends & strangers). From the above table, it is found that females speak more politely to their female friends and strangers than to males. The evidence from the above table shows that if the female friends make them upset or angry, they usually do not complain. For example in situations 1 and 2, they say to their female friends who make them upset or angry the following statements:

"*Mohem nist.*", "*Šayæd dælili dašte ke karte mæno færamoš kærde biare.*"

(It is not important.), (Maybe, it had a reason that she forgot to bring my card.)

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Females usually do not blame their female friends and do not swear them, as it is clear from the above table; just 10% of females try to show their complaints to their female friends in an impolite behavior like scolding or swearing. In a big contrast, they usually show more impolite behaviors to their male friends who make them angry or upset. For example:

"Bahaš qæhr mikonæm va ʔæxm mikonæm." (I will not speak with him and I frown on him.)

"ʔæsabani mišæm." (I become angry.), *"Særeš dad mikešæm."* (I will shout at him.)

"Næbayæd zire qoleš bezæne. dævaš mikonæm." (He should not break his promise; I will kick up a row.)

The result from above table shows that females use more body language like frowning to males than females. Situations 3 and 4 are about a stranger who makes females angry or upset. Females show their complaints in different ways to female and male strangers. Also, there is a small rang of difference about their behaviors to males and females. In situation 3, about 10% of females show their complaint by swearing to males but just 6% of them do so to females. About 3% of females scold females in situation 3, but about 13% of them do so to male strangers. Generally, results in situations 3 and 4 show that women use more polite behaviors to female strangers than males when complaining. For example if a male stranger suddenly pushes them over, they become angrier, they blame and swear more. Here are some examples:

"ʔæge ye qæribe xanom holæm bede eyb nædare, šayæd hævaseš næbode. ʔæmma age qæribe ʔaqa baše bærmigærdæm to češaš xire mišæm. maga kore!" (If a female stranger pushes me over, it is not important. Maybe, her mind is elsewhere. But to a male stranger, I will stare at his eyes. He isn't blind. Is he?)

"Ba pesære dæva mikonæm be doxtære šayad tæzækor bedæm." (I will shout at that boy, but I just warn the girl.)

An interesting result shows that females do not use more body language when complaining to the same or the cross- gender (a friend or a stranger), but if they want to do so, they prefer to use it to males. For example in situation 2, there is no frowning on females but 6% of females frown on males, in situation 3 16% of females frown on males but 3% of them do so to females and in situation 4 there is no use of body language.

Table 2. Percentages of Politeness Strategies of Females in Situations 5 to 7. (Apologizing)

responses	Situation 5		Situation 6		Situation 7	
	To friends		To strangers			
	F to F	F to M	F to F	F to M	F to F	F to M
To express sorrow (length of utterances)	43% longer	36% longer	46% longer	60% longer	56% longer	86% longer
To explain the reason	16%	30%	16%	40%	---	13%
To offer compensation	26%	33%	26%	---	33%	---

5.1.2. Politeness Behaviors of Female Participants When Apologizing to the Same and Cross-Gender of Listeners (friends and strangers)

Situations 5 to 7 are about female participants who upset or offend others. It is important to see how they apologize and express their sorrows. Blum-kulka (1989) claimed that by apologizing, the speaker recognizes the fact that "a violation of a social norm has been committed and admits to the fact that s/he is at least partially involved in its cause. Apologies involve loss of face for the speaker and support for the hearer" (p. 11).

According to Blum-Kulka (1989), there are four potential strategies for performing the act of apologizing:

"1. An explanation or account of the cause which brought about the offence.

2. An expression of the speaker responsibility for the offence

3. An offer of repair

4. A promise of forbearance" (p. 12).

Individuals in the same society might differ in their speech act realization patterns, depending on personal variables such as sex, age or level of education. In this study, some apology performances were found in the data compiled by the questionnaire and interviews which are as follows:

1. Expressing sorrow that can be in long utterances or short ones such as saying just sorry. Using long utterances for apologizing is the indication of a more polite way to express the sorrow.

2. Explaining the reason of their faults.

3. Offering compensation

The evidence from the above table shows that females usually try to apologize to others using long utterances. The point is that if the listeners are male strangers, females use more long utterances to show their sorrows. For example, in situation 6, 60% of females and in situation 7, 86% of them have used long utterances. Here are some examples of female responses to male strangers:

"Vay bebæxšid patono leh kærdæm, xeili šærmændeh, hævasæm nabod…"

(Excuse me; I stepped on your foot. I am so sorry, my mind was elsewhere.)

"Vay bebæxšid paton ke næsoxt, ʔædæb kari kærdæm qæsde bæd nædaštæm."

(Sorry, were your feet burned? What a thing I did! I had no bad intention.)

Female responses to female strangers:

"He! Bebæxšid xanom." (oh, sorry lady) *"Šærmænde xanom."* (I am sorry lady.) *"Mæzerat mixam."* (Excuse me)

Another interesting result is that females try to explain the reason of their offences more to male participants than to females, no matter a friend or a stranger. As the result shows, about 30% of participants in situation 5 and 40% in situation 6 and 13% in situation 7 express their apologies to males by explaining the reason of their faults. However, they offer compensation more to a female than a male stranger (about 33% in situation 7 and 26% in situation 6). Here are some examples of offering compensation to females:

"Xanom beza pakeš konæm." (Let me clean it.)

"Sæbr kon dæstmal biaræm pakeš konæm."

(Wait, I will bring handkerchief to clean that.)

"Bede lebaseto bebæræm bešoræm." (Give your cloth to me to wash it.)

On the whole, it seems that female participants show more consideration to males than females, perhaps they want to minimize their faults and protect their own faces.

Table 3. Percentages of Politeness Strategies of Females in Situations 8 and 9. (Comforting)

responses		Situation 8		Situation 9	
		To friends			
		F to F	F to M	F to F	F to M
To comfort others (length of utterances)		90% longer	36% longer	53% longer	46% longer
To comfort their friends with actions	1. help their friends to find the things	---	---	33%	---
	2. buy their friends the new one	---	66%	20%	13%
Without showing consideration		---	66%	---	16%

5.1.3. Politeness Behaviors of Female Participants When Comforting to the Same and Cross-Gender of Listeners

Situations 8 and 9 are about female participants who try to comfort their male or female friends. The comforting performances which were found in the data compiled through the questionnaire are as follow:

1. Length of utterance

2. To help their friends to find the things

3. To buy them the new one

4. To show no consideration

The evidence from the above table indicates that in situation 8; almost all females try to comfort their friends no matter what the gender is. However, 90% of females use long utterances to comfort their female friends and 36% of them comfort their male friends using short utterances. Here are some examples:

F to F: *"Qose næxor azizæm,terme dige qæboli hætmæn, beheš fekr nækon."* (Don't be upset, my dear. Certainly, you will pass the exam next term. Don't think about that.)

F to M: *"Eib nædare." "Bixial."* (It's not important. Take it easy.)

This indicates that females use more polite strategies to females than males. The interesting finding shows that about 66% of females show no consideration to their male friends in situation 8. (for example: *"Haqeše ke ʔoftade."* (It was his right that he couldn't pass the exam.) *"Mohem nist ke qæbol næšode mixast bištær bexone."* (His not passing the exam is not important. He should have studied more.)

The examples show that females give more support and understanding to their female friends. The same is true about situation 9. Females show more understanding to females than males. About 53% of the participants try to comfort their female friends, using long utterances and 46% do the same to their male friends. About 33% of females try to comfort their female friends by helping them to find the lost thing and 20% of females buy their female friends the new one. However, just 13% of females do the same thing to their male

friends. This indicates that female participants comfort their female friends with more actions.

5.2. Politeness Behaviors of Male Participants

Table 4. Percentages of Politeness Strategies of Males in Situations 1 to 4 (Complaining)

Make complaints	responses	Situation 1		Situation 2		Situation 3		Situation 4	
		To friends				To strangers			
Degree of politeness:1is more polite, 3 is less polite		M to F	M to M	M to F	M to M	M to F	M to M	M to F	M to M
The degree of politeness: 1 is more polite 4 is less polite	warning with a smile	6%	40%	26%	---	10%	20%	---	---
	becoming angry and taunting	---	6%	16%	73%	10%	10%	36%	16%
	scolding, fighting	---	---	---	50%	---	6%	66%	---
	swearing	10%	30%	---	---	---	---	---	33%
Making complaint with body language	frowning on	83%	16%	10%	---	13%	23%	---	---
Without making complaints	never mind no response	26%	---	46%	6%	66%	6%	---	---

5.2.1. Politeness Behaviors of Male Participants When Complaining to the Same and Cross-Gender of Listeners (friends and strangers)

The results in situations 1 and 2 indicate that male participants usually do not make complain to their female friends (for example, in situation 1 almost 83% of male participants show no complaint to female friends). In other words, they speak more politely to females than males.

As the evidence from the above table shows, male participants generally express their complaints to males using body language or warning them with a

smile. Moreover, it seems that males do not swear their female and male friends. Another interesting result is that male participants scold far more to males than females. Some examples in situation 1 and 2 are as follow:

M to F: *"Čon xanome ʔeib nædare migzæræm."* (Because she is a female, I will overlook that. It's not important.)

"Miram ye sandevič migiræm xodæmo sir mikonæm." (I will buy a sandwich for myself.)

M to M: *"Bayæd az đibeš hæzine kone bæram sandevič bexære."* (He should buy a sandwich for me.)

"Čændta fohš beheš midæm dige tekrar nækone." (I swear him not to do that again.)

About situations 3 and 4 findings indicate that male participants use more politeness strategies to express their complaints to female strangers than male strangers. Males do not show their complaints to female strangers and they even forgive them as shown in 66% in situation 3. However, in situation 4, they express their anger to both females and males and their reason to showing anger to females is that females in this situation as a salesperson have a responsibility. What is interesting is that even in situation 4 males use more polite strategy to show their complaints to females than males.

Table 5. Percentages of Politeness Strategies of Males in Situations 5 to 7 (Apologizing)

responses	Situation 5		Situation 6		Situation 7	
	To friends		To strangers			
	M to F	M to M	M to F	M to M	M to F	M to M
To express sorrow (length of utterances)	30% longer	53% shorter	40% longer	43% shorter	60% longer	63% shorter
To explain the reason	3%	---	20%	---	26%	---
To offer compensation	66%	46%	13%	56%	---	36%

5.2.2. Politeness Behaviors of Male Participants When Apologizing to the Same and Cross-Gender of Listeners (friends and strangers)

Based on the result from the above table, males use more polite ways to apologize to their female friends and female strangers than their male friends and male strangers. About 66% of males usually try to offer compensation to their female friends more than their male friends. However, in situations 6 and 7, almost 13% of males offer compensation to a female stranger but 56% in situation 6 and 36% in situation 7 do the same to male strangers. The reason can be due to our culture that the compensation for female stranger is not easy for males.

From table 5 it is clear that males usually do not apologize by explaining the reason of their faults; however, they do so to female friends and strangers far more than males in order to mitigate their faults. Some examples are as follow:

Situation 6: M to F: *"ʔozr mixam đozvæton xærab šod, bezarid yeki bæraton tæhieh konæm."* (Sorry, your pamphlet was destroyed. Let me buy another one for you.)

"Mæzeræt mixam hætmæn đoreš mikonæm." (I am sorry, I will prepare another one for you.)

M to M: *"ʔozr mixam dadaš."* (I am sorry, pal!) *"Šærmænde đozvæt xis šod."* (Sorry, your pamphlet got wet.)

Situation 5 & 7: M to F: *"Šærmænde xanom qæsde bædi nædaštæm."* (Sorry lady, I had no bad intention.) *"Xeili moteʔæsefæm xanom nædidæm be xoda."* (So sorry lady, I didn't see that.)

M to M: *"Šærmænde dadaš bezar pakeš konæm."* (Sorry pal, let me clean it.)

"Bede lebaseto bešoræm." (Give your cloth to me to wash.)

"Bezar ba ye dæstmal pakeš konæm." (Let me clean it with a handkerchief.)

Table 6. Percentages of Politeness Strategies of Males in Situations 8 and 9 (Comforting)

responses		Situation8		Situation9	
		To friend			
		M to F	M to M	M to F	M to M
To comfort others (length of utterances)		86% longer	63% shorter	20% longer	23% shorter
To comfort their friends with actions	1. help their friends to find the things	---	---	26%	---
	2. buy their friends the new one	---	---	80%	20%
Without showing consideration		---	20%	---	30%

5.2.3. Politeness Behaviors of Male Participants When Comforting others to the Same and Cross-Gender of Listeners

In terms of length of utterance, in situation 8, it can be seen that 86% of males use long utterances to comfort their female friends; however, 63% of males use short utterances to comfort their male friends. In situation 9, the results show that if there is a chance to comfort others by helping to find the thing or buying them something new, 80% of males buy a new thing for their female friends. 20% of males help their male friends to find the lost thing and 26% of them buy their male friends something new. The interesting result is that males try to show their comfort to female friends far more than male friends. As the evidence from the above table indicates, 30% of males do not show any consideration to their male friends. Here are some examples:

M to M: *"Dæstpačolofti hæsti ke gomeš kærdi."* (You are clumsy that you have lost it.) *"Mohem nist yeki dige mixæri."* (It is not important. You will buy another one.)

"Begærd peidaš mikoni." (Search. you shall find that.)

M to F: *"Narahæt næbaš yeki bærat mixæræm."* (Don't worry; I will buy another one for you.) *"Xodæm vasæt peidaš mikonæm ?æzizæm."* (I will find that for you my dear.)

It can be concluded that males use more polite strategies to comfort their female friends than their male friends.

6. Conclusion

In this part, the findings of females' politeness strategies, males' politeness strategies and the relationship between participants which affect the use of their politeness strategies are discussed. Moreover, the results are compared with the previous studies to see whether they are corresponding or not.

The general findings of the research:

1. Females speak more politely to their female friends than to their male friends.

2. Females speak more politely to female strangers than male strangers.

3. It can be concluded that the gender of the listeners is also a critical factor affecting the politeness behaviors of the speakers.

4. Gender of the strangers is important to cause the change of the politeness behaviors of the speakers.

5. Social distance of the listeners causes a slight change in the politeness strategies of the speakers.

6. Males speak more politely to females than males whether a friend or a stranger.

As the findings of the study indicate, it appears that females speak more politely to females than to males. According to the previous studies on politeness, generally women speak more politely and polite speech patterns are more associated with women. Some linguists argue that women choose polite

speech as a coping strategy to avoid confrontation. According to Brown (1980), women in general speak more politely, because they are culturally "relegated to a secondary status relative to men and a higher level of politeness is expected from inferiors to superiors" (p. 2).

However a study of Brown (1980) on Mayan community showed that sometimes women were less polite than men. He claimed that these behaviors were due to social differences in the position of women and men in the society. It is interesting that Brown (1980) challenged this view that women speak more politely than men. He believes that socio-cultural factors of each community should be taken into consideration. He stated "the link between behavior and a social structure also provide a basis for prediction about when and where and under what conditions women's speech will take on certain characteristics" (Brown, 1980, p. 22).

Therefore, it is better to link women or men politeness behaviors to a social structure and culture in a specific community. The findings of this study indicate that the politeness behaviors of males and females depend on many factors such as gender of the listeners and the relationship between listeners and the speakers. Moreover, the role of culture should not be dismissed.

In this study, the students were native of Kermanshah city, educated with different socio- economic cultural backgrounds that all of these factors affect the politeness strategies of the participants. The interesting findings of the research indicate that women not only use more polite strategies to their female friends but also to the female strangers. It shows that the social distance of the listeners do not cause a change in female polite strategies. They express more anger and use less polite strategy to a male friend or a male stranger who has offended them. The same is true for other speech acts in this study like apologizing and comforting. In a big contrast, males speak more politely to a

female friend or a stranger than to males. Their reasons were that women are more sensitive and weak and needs to be taken care of.

The findings of the research are corresponding to previous studies which reflect the image of females in the society as less confident, lower social status, powerless and shy, So men try to behave them more politely in order not to offend their faces.

On the whole, it can be concluded that it is true that women try to be more polite in order to maintain an aesthetically acceptable appearance to avoid the risk of rejection and stigma, but politeness behaviors of women and men are culture sensitive and many factors should be taken into consideration in order to examine their politeness strategies. For example, in this study it was seen that in situation 3, if a male stranger pushes a woman passing by, the woman become angry and try to express her anger by use of body language or uttering a word, but if a woman pushes them suddenly, most of women show no reaction. This kind of behavior has a root in our culture and society and it can be different from other societies. Brown (1980) stated "by linking behavior to social structure we are enabled to ask the question why do women talk the way they do in the society and what social structure, pressure and constraints are modeling behavior" (p. 22).

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