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The Effectiveness of Polite Language in Social Behavior

Md. Shaon Akter*

Department of English, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University, Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

*Correspondence: shekhshaon1989@gmail.com (Md. Shaon Akter, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University, Jamalpur, Bangladesh).

ABSTRACT

Linguistic politeness which is an important issue in sociolinguistics is social behavior because it plays a useful role in human characters. On the other hand, it shows personality and represents the culture of a nation, and even represents the background of the people. The differences in using politeness find a place in conversational talk and are also seen among the young generations who are studying in different educational institutions. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of polite language in social behavior that avoids clashes and runs good relations among human beings in social relationships. We developed a set of questionnaires that were used to collect data from male and female graduate students. We gave the questionnaires to the male and female students of eight different educational institutions and collected the primary data from questionnaires in which they answer all the questions in sequential order. We have used statistical methods to analyze the datasets that expose the politeness in using language between male and female students. The result shows some differences in linguistic behavior between male and female students and both male and female students have different aspects in linguistic behavior that shows politeness in conversational talk that avoids clashes and runs good relation among the human being in social relationship. The majority of male and female students avoid slang language and they always talk softly they also maintain politeness that helps them to run good relationships among themselves in society when they talk to others.

Keywords: Linguistic politeness, Dominance language, Gender language, and Aspects of linguistic behavior.

INTRODUCTION:

The linguistic aspect of politeness is of three type's claims by Gu, (1990). Firstly, linguistic politeness can be different when the speaker talks to children, teachers, students, and employees as well. Teachers, students, and children are familiar with the speaker for this reason politeness does mostly work in a conversation. Secondly, when people talk to the common people of the society based on socio-economic conditions can be different in linguistic politeness. The common people bear different mentalities, different behavior, and different personality as well that is why

politeness varies from person to person and place to place. Thirdly, linguistic politeness differently shown in a conversation when the speaker talks to friends who are very close to their relationship. Pilegaard, (1997) said that to show politeness, the same forms of linguistic behavior are not used in conversation as well as in different situations. The relationship between sociolinguistics and politeness in the language lies in politeness (Jary, 1998). Politeness in language has been felt and the most discussed as well as an influential topic within pragmatics (Lakoff, 1973; Brown & Levinson, 1978/1987; Leech, 1983). Nguyen Van Han

states that language is one of the most powerful tools which show supremacy. El-daly, (2011) claimed that at the end of the twentieth century three major themes dominate the language and gender research from 1973. So, right now language becomes the most powerful tool for the male to express their superiority, as well as some critics, argue that male speech has more dominance power and superiority than female but (Chen, 1993) claims that the polite form of language in conversational talk has different purposes because polite forms are used to respect the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Fraser, (1990) claims that linguistics and sociology are the combinations of sociolinguistics. Gender language has become a major part of sociolinguistics and gender difference has been included in language studies for a long time. Gender study shows that women are equal to men and equality should exist in every opportunity. On the other hand, differences in using language between males and females are found in conversation. Holmes, (2008) points out that society expects good behavior from women than men. Coates, (2007) claims that women are dominated in society and their dominance approach reveals the differences in linguistic behavior. Wardhaugh, (2010) points out that the dominance approach is the nature of men's linguistic behavior. Cameron, (2007) said that different approach exists in the conversational talk between men and women and male speech reveals the superiority to female speech and two ways of dominance approach are found in their conversation. Lakoff, (1973) claims that vast differences in gender language are found in language use and these differences show the power of men in language use and the powerlessness of women in language use. Lakoff, (1973) the pioneer of this field confirmed in her work that there are some features in women's speech that are different from men's speech. In this case, men take into account this politeness as weakness and try to rule over the women in society. Wardhaugh, (2011) argues that women use more compliments in linguistic behavior than men and they use the polite form in their conversation. Society takes modesty as a weakness in the context of Bangladesh. Men and women take a part in how they use language and in the field of folk linguistics it has developed (Broadbridge, 2003). Lakoff, 1973; Taneen 1991; Cameron, 2003), claims that gender differences are found

in pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and discourse style from a sociolinguistics perspective. Robin Lakoff, (1973) exposes four approaches belonging to gender language and describes that the language used by men is stronger, prestigious, and desirable and said, women, are socialized into behaving like ladies. Talbot, (1998) claims that different approaches for the analysis of language in social science are found between both of them. In the context of Bangladesh, the male is the decision-maker in family life and they think of themselves as superior to females that is why women try to keep themselves silent and they use a polite form of linguistic behavior to show their modesty. Lack of confidence, politeness, and uncertainty that are identified when they talk to others are the major aspects of women's language Finch, (2003).

METHODOLOGY:

Initial Research

In this study, the quantitative research method was applied. The primary data were obtained via a questionnaire and an individual interview, and the researcher had easy access to the information; this method was deemed adequate for the study.

Sampling Technique

A stratified sampling strategy was used in this investigation. The researchers chose several graduate-level universities in Bangladesh at random using the sampling approach, and samples were conveniently selected from a broader population. Because the goal of the study is to illustrate the usefulness of polite language in linguistic behavior among male and female pupils.

Participants of the Study

The purpose of this study is to reveal the usefulness of polite language in linguistic behavior among male and female students. Participants for this study included both male and female graduate students from various universities. A total of 200 people were included in the study. The questionnaire was written in both Bangla and English for all participants.

Data Collection Procedure

A questionnaire and an interview method were used to collect primary data from graduate students. The researchers visited eight different graduate colleges and universities in Bangladesh's Sirajgoanj and Kushtia districts to collect data. Close-ended questions were

employed by the researchers, and the validity of the participants' language(s) ability was further verified by asking them to speak with others in the new language (s). Furthermore, anytime somebody had difficulty understanding the questionnaire, researchers promptly assisted them in resolving the issue. After gathering data, it was hand tallied with great care to ensure accuracy, and the results were documented in tabular format. We surveyed 200 male and female students who are studying in the graduate program of eight different colleges of Bangladesh. We make a set of questionnaires that were used for collecting data. We gave the questionnaires to the male and female students who answer all the questions. We have used the purposive sampling technique for collecting data be-

cause we want to investigate the effectiveness of polite language in social behavior that avoids clashes and runs good relations among the human being in social relationships. We have used statistical methods to analyze the datasets that expose the effectiveness of polite language among male and female students in linguistic behavior. The survey is the source of primary data and the different books and articles on critical comments are the sources of the secondary data collected from and directions from scholarly writings considered as helping sources. We will also look up some influential books on sociolinguistics in the library and it looks like there is a large selection that we can use to help aid in my research.



Fig 1: Two areas, Kushtia district, and Sirajganj district were selected for collecting data though our main purpose is to find out linguistic aspects.

RESULTS:

The present study of politeness in conversational talk between men and women is discussed here. Based on

research purpose the primary data are analyzed and the results are shown below:

Table 1: Using addressing words as polite form.

| Gender | Linguistic behavior | Examples | Percentage |
|--------|---|--|------------|
| Female | Mostly use the polite form in linguistic behavior to address. | Dear Mam, Dear sir or respected teacher, My dear, My dear friend, etc. | 60% |
| Male | Use the polite form to address but not more than female | | 40% |

Here we see those female students mostly use politeness in linguistic behavior on the other hand male students use the polite form but not more than females.

The survey shows that 60% of female students use the polite form in linguistic behavior on the other hand 40% of male students use politeness in linguistic behavior when they interact with each other.

Table 2: Using Sir, Madam as polite form.

| Gender | Linguistic behavior | Examples | Percentage |
|--------|---|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Female | Use polite form without <i>dear</i> to address but not more than female. | Yes Sir, Yes Mam, My friend, etc. | 40% |
| Male | Mostly use the polite form without <i>dear</i> in linguistic behavior to address. | | 60% |

Here we see that male students mostly use politeness without *dear* in linguistic behavior on the other hand female students use the polite form without *dear* but not more than males. The survey shows that 40% of

female students use the polite form without *dear* in linguistic behavior on the other hand 60% of male students use politeness without *dear* in linguistic behavior when they interact with each other.

Table 3: Using please, kindly, excuse me as polite form.

| Gender | Linguistic behavior | Examples | Percentage |
|--------|--|---|------------|
| Female | Mostly use the polite form in linguistic behavior to show modesty. | Please, kindly, excuse me, could you please, would you mind, etc. | 60% |
| Male | Use the polite form to show modesty but not more than female | | 40% |

Here we see that female students mostly use politeness in linguistic behavior to show modesty on the other hand male students use the polite form to show modesty but not more than females. The survey shows

that 60% of female students use the polite form to show modesty in linguistic behavior on the other hand 40% of male students use politeness in linguistic behavior when they interact with each other.

Table 4: Using Greetings, Thank you, Congratulations as polite form.

| Gender | Linguistic behavior | Examples | Percentage |
|--------|--|--|------------|
| Female | Mostly use the polite form in linguistic behavior to wish modesty. | Greetings, Thank you, Congratulations, happy anniversary, happy birthday, etc. | 55% |
| Male | Use the polite form to wish modesty but not more than female | | 45% |

Here we see those female students mostly use politeness in linguistic behavior to wish their family, friends, and relatives in their happy moment, or successful time on the other hand male students use the polite form to wish their family, friends, and relatives in their happy moment, or successful time but not more than female. The survey shows that 55% of female students use the polite form to wish modesty in linguistic behavior on the other hand 45% of male students use politeness in linguistic behavior when they wish the nearest people.

each article that positive politeness that we find in our research in the conversation of female students creates a good atmosphere in a conversational talk as (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003) said polite strategies get attention to others. This result focuses on the effectiveness of polite language among graduate students when they are involved in the conversation. It is also found that the ways of using language vary from man to man, woman to woman. Haas, (1979) claims that males are generally more assertive than females. In Bangladeshi society, women are considered as the symbol of politeness and they never raise their voice frequently in any situation (Hossain and Islam, 2022; Karim and Akter, 2021).

DISCUSSION:

It is found that most of the female students are polite in conversational talk rather than male students. On the other hand, Borris and Zecho, (2018) find in his res-

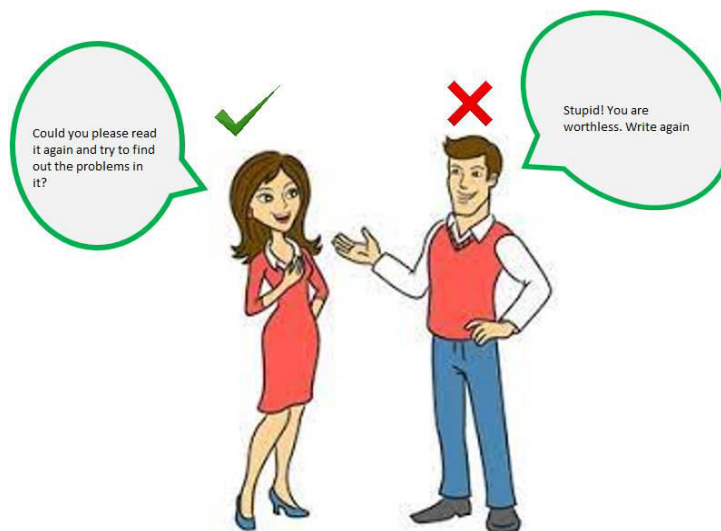


Fig 2: The result shows that most of the male and female students support using polite language in social behavior.

From their childhood, parents make them understand that you are a woman and you should not raise your voice in family life, in society, and even with others when you talk because if you talk to others softly, it will show your politeness. Both male and those female students claim that those who use polite language in their social behavior can maintain good relationships avoid clashes among themselves and also claim that those who always use the polite form in their conversation never involve them in clashes and bargaining. On the other hand, both male and female students claim that those who do not use these addressing words before starting their conversation with others cannot maintain a good relationship and also may not avoid clashes in social relations and may involve them in bargaining. In terms of addressing words, the survey shows that female students mostly use the polite form in linguistic behavior rather than male students. 60% female students use *dear sir, dear mam, respected teacher, my dear, my dear friends*, etc. They always try to present politeness in their behavior that is why when they address others they use *dear* which draws the attention to others closely. Terkourafi, (2015) claims that positive politeness makes closeness which is very important in a relationship like friendship and he also said that everybody takes this positive behavior as comfortable behavior. Meier, (1995) claims that positive politeness in linguistic behavior attracts the positive face of the listeners. Positive behavior gets feedback, the positive attitude which is expected from the relationship because both the speaker

and the listener have a good sense to identify the positive politeness and the negative politeness. On the other hand, Locher, (2015) said that negative politeness does not mean negative facts or bad. If you say “Sorry to say that I have no money, can you borrow some money?” Or if you need help with a book and say “Could you please help me to get a book”. The target group claims that those who use these kinds of sentences in their conversation avoid clashes or bargaining with others. These kinds of attitudes do not mean the negative strategies of linguistic behavior. Both male and female students claim that those who use these addressing words before starting their conversation with others can maintain a good relationship and also avoid clashes in social relations and cannot involve them in bargaining. On the other hand, both male and female students claim that those who do not use these addressing words before starting their conversation with others cannot maintain a good relationship and also may not avoid clashes in social relations and may involve them in bargaining.

In terms of addressing words without *dear*, the survey shows that male students mostly use the polite form without *dear* in linguistic behavior rather than female students. 60% female students use *dear* on the other hand 40% female students do not use *dear* such as *sir, mam, respected teacher, my friends*, etc. to address in linguistic behavior. Both male and female students use these addressing words because they want to respect the seniors or superior. The senior and the superior do

always expect these addressing words from the juniors or the students and those who maintain the official decorum by saying *dear* is always appreciated because these words bear the good form of politeness. Kasper, (1990) claims that politeness is a formula or custom used in society. They try to present politeness without *dear* in their behavior that is why when they address others without *dear*. Brown & Levinson, (1987) said that these polite forms are used to communicate as polite strategies. The target group said that those who do not use these addressing words or address someone without polite forms may not control themselves in conversation because polite forms or polite language can restrain emotion and help to avoid clashes.

In terms of super polite form to show modesty such as: *Please, kindly, excuse me, could you please, would you mind, etc.* 60% of female students use super polite forms to show modesty because these super polite forms are mostly used in linguistic behavior and Bangladeshi context these super polite forms are officially used and also called official polite form in linguistic behavior. Officially female students maintain linguistic decorum. On the other hand, 40% of male students use the super polite form to show modest behavior which means most of the male students does not use the super polite form in linguistic behavior. Both male and female students claim that those who use super polite forms in their conversation with others can maintain a good relationship and also avoid clashes in social relationships and cannot involve them in bargaining because most of the modest people use the super polite form in their conversation to please others. On the other hand, the target group said that those who do not use super polite forms in their conversation with others may not maintain a good relationship and also may not avoid clashes in social relationships and may involve them in bargaining because it is a natural way to please others by using the super polite form. Human beings always expect good behavior, good manner, and a modest approach from others.

In terms of super polite form to wish the family members, friends, and relatives such as *Greetings, Thank you, Congratulations, happy anniversary, happy birthday, etc.* When their family members bring success and honor they wish them by saying *congratulations or greetings* and this is also considered a polite form of

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language to wish others. When both male and female students get help from their nearest persons they said *thank you*. This is another social formality to respond to others and those who do not maintain this formality, are considered manner fewer persons in the Bangladeshi context. Wishing the relatives on their special days such as anniversaries, birthday is a common culture in Bangladesh. Both male and female students with their family members, friends, and relatives on social media and physically. 55% of female students use super polite forms to wish their nearest people because these super polite forms are mostly used in linguistic behavior and in the Bangladeshi context these super polite forms are socially used and also called social polite forms in linguistic behavior.

Socially female students maintain linguistic decorum. On the other hand, 45% of male students use the super polite form to wish their family, friends, and relatives which mean most of the male students do not use the super polite form in linguistic behavior to wish on a special moment or successful time. The use of politeness in a language bears greatness and acceptance because the people of a society expect that the people should use politeness in their behavior as Nwoye, (1992) claims that polite forms in conversational talk are considered as good conduct. Both male and female students claim that those who use super polite forms to wish others in their conversation with others can maintain a good relationship and draw attention to others in social relationships and consider them as modest and well-mannered persons that is why they never involve them in bargaining because most of the modest person use the super polite form to wish others in their conversation to please others. On the other hand, the target group said that those who do not use super polite forms to wish others in their conversation with others are not considered as well-mannered persons and may not maintain a good relationship with others because it is a natural way to please others by using the super polite form. Human beings always expect good behavior, good manner, and a modest approach from others. Brown, (2015) claims that to practice sir/madam is possible in a conversation. Politeness in conversation depends on appearance or positive/negative face because positive face connects on the other hand negative face does not (Mboudjeke, 2010). However, politeness

plays a vital role in maintaining the social relationship and it is considered as friendly behavior (Borris and Zecho, 2018).

Limitation of the Study

Regardless of the fact that this study is based on a specific region, the Sirajgonj district of Bangladesh, it cannot cover the entire situation in Bangladesh. The survey of 200 graduate students may not be sufficient to make appropriate generalizations. Future researchers should avoid these limitations.

CONCLUSION:

From this study, it is found that both male and female students are quite different in conversational talk but both of them use polite language in their conversation. The researchers have got the effectiveness of polite language in social behavior that avoids clashes and helps maintain good relations among the human being in social relationships. The polite forms or the polite languages have mostly been identified in linguistic behavior such as using addressing words in polite form, using addressing words without *dear*, using modest words in polite form, using the polite form for wishing, using politeness in conversation, and all these aspects are used in conversational talk among the graduate students and the usages of these aspects vary from person to person. From the survey, it is clear that both male and female students claim that those who use polite forms in their conversation with others can maintain a good relationship and also avoid clashes in social relations and cannot involve them in bargaining because most of the modest people use the polite form in their conversation to please others. On the other hand, the target group said that those who do not use polite forms in their conversation with others may not maintain a good relationship and also may not avoid clashes in social relations and may involve them in bargaining.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The authors declared there are no conflicts of interest to publish the present research study.

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