

## Politeness and Daily Use of Language in Formal Context Among EFL Kurdish Learners: Soran University as an Example

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### ABSTRACT:

Language is regarded as a method that people use to exchange ideas with each other, and it is considered the primary source of communication among human beings because it holds a profound role in comprehending the world around and beyond them. To speak graciously and avoid face-threatening acts, language users are required to use politeness strategies. This study aims to find out the politeness strategies which are employed by Kurdish English language learners, at Soran University, as well as the differences in using these strategies in terms of gender and social status. Data is collected through a structured questionnaire which consists of five questions. The sample of the study is 40 EFL learners, non-randomly selected, at the Faculty of Arts/ English Department during the academic year 2020-2021. Further, this paper adopted a descriptive quantitative method for data collection and explanation. It used Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) as a model, as well as the SPSS program version (25) for analyzing and depicting the percentage and frequency of occurrences of the politeness strategies used by male and female students with their classmates and teachers in different situations. The findings show that Kurdish English language learners at Soran University employed politeness strategies, in the formal context, but they are treated differently in terms of gender and social status.

### Introduction:

The past thirty years have revealed special attention towards the phenomenon of Politeness. It is dealt with in various fields, namely, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Sociolinguistics, Conversational Analysis, Ethnography of Communication, etc... Therefore, defining this term is controversial; some linguists, for example, Thomas (1995:150) states that politeness is actually about what the addresser says, and how the addressee reacts, and thus this shows that politeness is viewed as a pragmatic concept, while Holmes (2001:2680) regards it as a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

That is, politeness is considered an important aspect of communication since it is concerned with the appropriate use of language to show consideration and care for the feelings and desires of both speaker and listener. Thus, formulating an interpersonal relationship requires behaving in a way that is socially correct and follows the rules for what the society or one's culture considers as appropriate or polite (Yule 1998:286).

It is an obvious fact that politeness is the relationship between how something is said, and the addressee's judgment of how it should be said. Hence, the speaker must be very careful about what he/she says because any act that puts face at risk is called a face-threatening act

(FTA). When FTA happens, the threat can be lessened through using politeness strategies that have been proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). The strategies involve bald- on record, positive, negative, and off-record strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987:69).

Generally stating, since politeness is culture specific, the speaker, to save his/her face, should be very careful about the various factors which influence politeness such as gender and social status (Brown and Levinson, 1987:65).

Gender refers to male and female distinction; it is a social concept, discussed in the field of sociolinguistics. Lakoff (1973:74). believes that women's speech seems to be more polite, he also believes that men are taught to be more polite with women than with other men While others such as Mills (2003:202) states that having such a belief that women are more polite is not based on research and it is just a claim because it differs from one culture to another.

Social status or someone's social role in society may refer to one's occupation, wealth, and social rank. This plays an important role in the way that people behave with them regarding their position, for example, the way someone talks to his/her teacher is different from the way he/she does it with someone who is his/her classmate (Wrightson, 2004: 31).

Further, interesting aspects of face and politeness in language use is that they differ from one culture to another, from language to language. For instance, in African culture, it is considered rude for a young person to address an old man by his first name instead he has to call him as uncle even though they have no blood relationship. Further, it will also be regarded as an insult to a married woman, of about sixty years age, to be called as Mrs., the polite way to call her is Mama. Thus, it does not mean she is biologically the addressee's mother but the identified culture regards this as polite (Yule, 2010:134-136).

One of the models of politeness is the one which is introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987). Even though Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness has received many criticisms, it is still considered as one of the most widely used models of politeness.

### Statement of the problem:

The current study focuses on politeness strategies that are employed by EFL Kurdish learners at Soran University/ Faculty of Arts/ English Department, and the differences found in using these strategies, informal context, in terms of gender and social status. Dealing with such a subject with EFL learners is problematic because they are not native speakers, hence they mix their first language use with their second language, and as a result, they may treat politeness strategies appropriately or not.

### Research questions

- 1- What are the politeness strategies employed by Kurdish FFL learners of English in formal context at Soran University/Faculty of Arts/English Department?
- 2- What is the effect of gender on the use of politeness strategies employed by Kurdish FFL learners of English?
- 3- What is the effect of social status on the use of politeness strategies employed?

## Aims of the research

- 1- Examining the employment of politeness strategies by EFL students at Soran University-Faculty of Arts
- 2- Finding out the difference in the frequency of occurrence of politeness strategies used by participants in terms of gender.
- 3- Finding out the difference in the frequency of occurrence of the politeness strategies used by participants in terms of social status.

## Language and its Daily Use

Language has a crucial role in every individual's daily life. It can be used to perform various activities such as writing emails, making conversations, writing, etc. Language is a system of communication; the process of communication can occur through different forms of language such as spoken or written, verbal or non-verbal.

Linguists have various definitions of language. Sapir (1921:12). defines it as "a purely human method of communicating or exchanging ideas, emotions, and desires, which means a system that freely produces sounds" This definition expresses that language is mainly concerned with only human beings; it provides them with a system of sounds produced by them for communicating.

Whereas Chomsky (1957:13) defines language as an "inherent capability of the native speakers to understand, and form grammatical sentences, language is a set of finite or infinite sentences". This definition indicates that Chomsky believes that language is an inborn or innate ability that human beings have. Sweet (1900:3), who is an English phonetician and language scholar, stated that: "language is the expression of ideas using speech – sounds are combined into words, and words are combined into sentences, this combination is telling that ideas can be changed into thoughts" .

Moreover, language is a tool that sets humans apart from any other species. It is more than a means of communication (spoken or written) since it has relation to all aspects of social life. Hence, effective communication does not only require well-organized ideas and coherent sentences and paragraphs but also the speaker has to think about the style, tone and clarity of his/her message (Chomsky, 1957:13). It should be formulated in such a way that reflects politeness; to be socially acceptable by language users.

## Politeness

Generally, to devote ample attention to the notion of politeness, it is viewed that the root from which 'politeness' is derived is a Latin word Politics (p.p. of polire 'polish' which indicates 'refined' or 'polished'. It goes with the traditional account of politeness which was known as the norms of communication which highlight good and acceptable manners (Onions, 1966:693).

It is certainly true that the politeness phenomenon has been tackled differently, depending on various considerations, by different scholars and linguists. Hence, as Thomas claims, it is concerned with individuals' choice of their linguistic expressions (1995:150).

Furthermore, politeness as a concept is seen as a "polite social behaviour, or etiquette, within a culture". And it is concerned with the perspectives of how being "tactful, generous, modest, and sympathetic toward others" (Yule, 1996:60). Moreover, Trosborg points out that politeness is described as the intention of people to save face. That is, language producers should consider their faces as well as the face(s) of their listener(s)/ reader(s) (1995:27).

While Gleason & Ratner (1998:286) define politeness as "taking care of other's feelings, it involves those actions associated with a positive and negative face". In their definition of politeness, it is noticeable that Gleason & Ratner like others focus on showing consideration for others' faces during the interaction.

In addition, politeness means people's wish to get their way and keep satisfactory public self-esteem or image (Black, 2006:33). However, Lakoff (1979 cited in Fraser 1990:223), outlines it as a "device used to reduce friction in personal interaction", and Leech (1983:109) proposes the 'Politeness Principle', which was outlined on the Grice's Cooperative Principle and the four maxims of 'quality', 'quantity', 'relevance' and 'manner' will "minimize impolite beliefs, maximize polite beliefs".

The politeness maxims of Leech's Politeness Principle include Tact maxim, Generosity maxim, Approbation maxim, modesty maxim, Agreement maxim and Sympathy maxim, Tact maxim; means the speaker, while communicating, expresses indirect tactful expressions to appear polite via minimizing cost to the hearer and maximize the benefit to the recipient.

-Would you mind standing up?

This expression highlights the point that 'standing up' is to the hearer's benefit and also gives the hearer opportunities of not performing the intended act.

With the Generosity maxim, the hearer should be given priority; that is, much consideration should be given to the hearer than the speaker. It means, minimizes benefit to the speaker and maximizes cost to the speaker. For examples:

-I can give you money

-You could borrow my car if you like

-You should relax and I will clean the house.

Here, the speaker is so generous to the hearer that s/he is intending and willing to give the hearer s/he could offer.

Moreover, the Approbation maxim means praising the hearer, avoiding unpleasant things to the hearer, giving minimal response via euphemisms or keeping silent; maximizing praise of the hearer and minimizing dispraise of the hearer.

-Lara, I know you are a smart student. Would you solve this math problem for me?

Furthermore, regarding the Approbation maxim, dispraise of the hearer is negatively evaluated and is considered as something impolite. Hence, to avoid this, indirect strategies

will be employed to mitigate, for example, the effect of criticism. See the following exchange:

A: Her performance was heartbreaking, wasn't it?

B: Was it?

Here, in the above exchange, 'B' is not fully agreed with what 'A' says, therefore, 'B' does not give a clear answer such as 'Yes'. And this implies that 'B' is not completely sure that 'A's viewpoint is correct, but at the same time, 'B' doesn't want it directly, rather 'B' will try to take the edge off face damaging acts, and indirectly smooth the tone of his doubt by raising a question.

Modesty maxim is concerned with how the speaker shows an understatement of one's importance when addressing the hearer. Concisely, it means minimizing praise of the speaker and maximizing dispraise of the speaker.

A: They were so kind to us.

B: Yes, they were

-Please, accept this small birthday gift from us.

In addition, the Agreement maxim focuses on maximizing the expectation of agreement between the speaker and the hearer and minimizing disagreement between them. See the following interaction:

A: French is a difficult language to learn.

B: True, but the grammar is quite easy

Here, in this example, 'B' doesn't agree with A's opinion. Hence, to appear polite, s/he doesn't intend to vividly utter his/her disagreement. That is, 'B' minimizes disagreement by utilizing partial agreement through using the word 'but'...

Eventually, the Sympathy maxim sheds light on maximizing sympathy (feeling of like) and minimizing antipathy (feeling of strong dislike) between the speaker and the hearer to depict solidarity between them. For example:

-I feel sorry about your mother

Instead of saying:

-I feel sorry about your mother's death. (i.e. It is regarded as tactless or inappropriate) (Leech, 1983:108-9,132-8) (Salman and Mohammad, 2017:134-8)

It is important to view that, politeness in this sense is essentially seen as a "Scalar phenomenon: the degree of imposition on the hearer will normally condition the degree of indirectness, mitigation or another politeness marker from the speaker". Thus, the degree of politeness is concerned with the relationship between the participants. That is, intimates will

be more direct with each other; for example, if the hearer realizes that, in specific situations, the speaker can't answer the phone, the imperatives might not be regarded as something inappropriate or impolite (Black,2006:73).

All in all, Leech (1983:80) believes that Politeness Principle should be added to Grice's Cooperative Principle since it rescues CP from serious trouble for it lacks politeness. And Politeness Principle (PP) organizes polite behaviours to reduce conflicts and minimize potential threats against people's self-image. Salman and Mohammad (2017:130) define politeness as "forms of behaviour that establish and maintain comity"

Further, Leech's politeness maxims are unique to specific cultures; they vary from one culture to another. That is, what is considered polite in one culture may be taken as something impolite or face threatening in another culture. And Paltridge (2012:52, 55, 57) also claims that the nature of face and politeness are viewed differently from one society to another and even from one culture to another.

Thus, it is significant to remember that context, in this situation, plays a crucial role in terms of identifying whether what someone says/writes should be interpreted as a face-saving act(polite) or not. For example, if someone utters a street remark such as 'Hello gorgeous' to a long-time friend can be regarded as an expression of intimacy and rapport.

Hence, it is necessary to point out that the strategies or ways through which politeness is communicated is not the same in different languages as well as across cultures and, thus, might reflect different things in different linguistic and cultural settings. Thus, politeness and face are instrumental for comprehending how individuals choose to utter things in particular ways in spoken and written discourse as well.

Moreover, Chapman (2011:132-3) points out that politeness takes into account the use of language in its social contexts. It is concerned with how people make use of certain forms of expression. In other words, politeness doesn't only deal with manners or behaviours that demonstrate respect and consideration for other's faces, obey social etiquette, avoid taboo and offensive expressions, and keep themselves away from rudeness and abruptness, but it also attempts to describe and illustrate how language should be utilized by users in different social contexts. That is, it tackles ideas that explain social motivations for speaking to each other; how interlocutors may behave not with abstract aspects of meaning.

In addition to what has been mentioned, Lakoff (1973:298 cited in Chapman2011) suggested three rules of politeness such as 'Do not impose', 'Give options' and 'Make A [the hearer] feel good – be friendly'.

Briefly, these rules will be illustrated as the following: Rule 1, 'Don't impose', gives the responsibility for the speakers not to make demands on hearers. For example, it is usually viewed that asking people questions about money or wealth is an act of imposition since people are put in a situation to utter information that they are reluctant or not interested to offer.

Another example for Rule 1 'Do not impose' is if someone says:

A-May I ask how much you took for that bag, Miss. Koyal?

This example, though appears lengthier as compared to 'B'

B- How much did you take for that bag?

In an example 'A', the addresser observes politeness Rule 1, and it is understood not as permission or request for asking a question, but it is the question itself.

Rule 2, 'Give options', suggests that the addresser should give the addressee vivid options to interpret an expression; how to avoid unpleasant interpretations. Thus, the speaker/writer avoids the employment of rude expressions of opinion or fact. For example, the addresser prefers, in some speech events or situations, the use of euphemisms over the taboo expressions.

Hence, though euphemism is less obvious than literal terms, it is more polite since it gives the addressee more options to get rid of unpleasant or abrupt interpretations. For example, people prefer someone as 'hard up' rather than 'poor' (Chapman, 2011:134-5).

Rule 3, 'Make A feel good', formulating a sense of camaraderie or solidarity between the speaker and hearer. According to this rule, people are not going to be straightforwardly and clear when they are involved in speaking in social situations. Thus, they intend to utilize more words than are sufficient to communicate their message. For example, they use the addressee's first name or camaraderie markers such as 'love', 'darling', etc. whose function is not informative but rather involves the addressee in what is being uttered (Chapman, 2011:35).

It is worth focusing on that even though, many linguists have proposed various theories on politeness and defined it differently, they all have shed light on the importance of having considerations for others (faces).

## The Notion of face

The concept of face is assumed to have originated in Chinese (Bargiela-chiappini, 2003:1454), and it has been brought to the attention of the west mainly through Goffman's theory of face, but has been popularized through Brown and Levinson's theory (1987). It is obvious that Goffman brought this notion, but it was not familiar that much, but with the theory of Brown and Levinson, it has been popularized and spread among linguists.

When people are involved in a conversation, they individually consider certain variables, whether consciously or unconsciously, that helps to determine the form of speech which they use in the interaction, Goffman(1955:213) called these variables "face" and defined it as "a positive social value that a person asks for himself/herself effectively by the line others assume he/she has taken during an interaction".

It is clear that Erving Goffman wrote about-face concerning how people engage in daily life's conversation; he claimed that everyone is concerned to some extent with how others perceive them. People act socially with other people to maintain the identity they create for others, this identity or public self-image is what they plan or project for when others act socially. However, losing face is suffering when an individual's public self-image is diminished, and also maintaining it could be achieved by taking a line while interacting socially. This line is what the person says or does during the interaction because it shows how the person

understands the situation. On the other hand, it depicts the other person's evaluation of the interaction. Thus, interaction is a process that could link face and line if the person acts socially, but if the person does not act socially, losing face will take place.

Whereas Brown and Levinson (1978:66-7) define the face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself", they divided the face into two separate but related aspects and defined it in terms of wants and desires. This definition clarifies that Brown and Levinson use the concept of face to explain politeness, and to them politeness is universal; it results from people's face needs.

## Types of face

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 32,65), the face has two components namely positive and negative. A positive face is concerned with people's wants or desires to be accepted by others, while a negative face is the need to be independent or give freedom for the actions. This means not to be imposed by others, for instance, 'I am sorry to bother you, I know that you are busy, but can you help me?' Thus, the listener is quite free to help him/her or not. Moreover, faces are expected to be saved or threatened when things are uttered or performed. People, in general, engage in ways that reflect two types of face acts when speaking with one another: face-threatening act and face-saving act.

Thus, Face threatening act (FTA) means giving a threat to another person's self-image or face wants which everyone always wants to be respected. And Face saving act is something done or said to lessen or avoid an embarrassing situation where a person's face is threatened. For example, 'can you pass me the sugar?' is functioned as an indirect request, though it is a question, that can lessen the possible threat to the hearer's face (Yule, 2010:60).

## Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies are speech acts that express concerns for others, and these strategies can reduce the threats to self-esteem "face" in a particular social context. Brown and Levinson (1987:69) suggest four strategies of politeness that are systematically linked to the degree of the face. These strategies are outlined below, and the first one is the least polite while the last is the politest one

- 1- **Bald On- Record:** According to this strategy, an utterance is said in the most direct, and clear way. It is used to directly address the other person to express his/her needs. For example, using the imperative form is an example of bald on record as it can be seen "give me the pen", but using a mitigating device such as "please" can soften the command, "please give me the pen", there is no ambiguity in the expression.
- 2- **Positive politeness strategy:** this strategy shows that the listener wants to be respected; it is concerned with avoiding offence by highlighting friendliness and approval.
- 3- **Negative politeness strategy:** this strategy gives freedom to the hearer or listener (Goffman, 1967:215). It also refers to the avoidance of imposition on the listener by using modal verbs and also taking permission to ask a question. Koike (1921:21). defines negative politeness as "consideration of the listener's wish to be considered in taking action and having attention".



- 4- **Bald-Off- Record:** This strategy was explained by Brown and Levinson (1987) as the use of indirect language. The FTA is performed indirectly, in other words, it is performed, for example, using implicature because the speaker's face threatening intention can be done by flouting the Gricean maxim. For instance, 'it is very hot here, it is an indirect request to open the window.

## Literature review

Many academics have so far conducted many types of research about the concepts of politeness and face, and they have recommended diverse theories in line with this. During the last decades, numerous research works, both theoretically and empirically have been presented on politeness strategies, and some common ones are chronologically identified as the following:

GU, Y. (1990), published a paper and examined the phenomenon of politeness in modern Chinese society. The present concept of civility is examined, as well as its historical origins. A comparison of western conceptions of face and civility to their Chinese counterparts is made. Four politeness maxims are stated and illustrated. On the one hand, the relationship between politeness and language and conversation is discussed.

Brown (2010) conducted a research and proposed a model for studying politeness in second language learning, and applied it on advanced learners of Korean, from "Western" backgrounds, who utilized different speech patterns. According to him, learning politeness in a second language is said to be a "re-framing" process. Different ideological loadings regarding what it means to "talk graciously" in different cultures, as well as the instability of "face" in L1-L2 meetings, complicate this process. The findings of the research suggest that L2 speakers' more egalitarian use of Korean speech styles stems not only from a lack of understanding of the "frames" in which different styles are often deployed but also from ideological hostility to employing these forms for overt age-rank marking.

In addition, Reza Adela, et al (2016) conducted research and they examined politeness tactics such as negative politeness, positive politeness, bald on-record, and bald-off-record strategies in posts authored by Iranian EFL students on a class blog as a means of asynchronous interaction with their professors and classmates. Content analysis and Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis were used to examine the data collected (CMDA). Positive techniques were widely utilized as evidence of psychologically close relationships, reciprocity, and friendship in a group, according to the findings.

Furthermore, Agbaglo (2017), in a study and dealt with the employment of politeness devices in the Analysis and Discussion parts of research articles produced by the University of Cape Coast English Language Teachers. The corpus consists of 20 research articles with Analysis and Discussion sections. These lecturers employ politeness methods in their research articles, according to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) and Myers' (1989) models. The investigation also revealed that these professors prefer to deploy negative politeness methods rather than positive politeness strategies.

Ranjbar and Sadeghoghli (2017), in a study used a survey and a discourse completion exam to investigate the degree of politeness that different personality types suggest in different contexts in an Iranian context. The findings reveal that the causes of any perceived

disparities in 'impoliteness' amongst learners with different personality types are more 'cultural' than 'impoliteness' on the students' part.

Another study was done by Mansoor (2018) and aimed to illuminate some important language characteristics of politeness that indicate the value of politeness in social interactions. On a more detailed level, the current research aims to uncover the most important notions in the study of linguistic politeness, as well as the disciplines in which politeness theories are related. It also goes over the most common and popular types of politeness. It also sheds insight on pertinent ways that represent important characteristics of politeness. The link between politeness and indirectness is shown in some methods. Some aspects that influence how and what is stated in a conversation are related to social distance and proximity, therefore choosing acceptable techniques are influenced by them. This research also determines whether all civilizations behave politely in the same way or different ways.

While Febtrina (2019), in a study handled the politeness methods and cooperative concept utilized in the film Beauty and the Beast (2017). Because all of the data was gathered from new sources and examined utilizing Politeness techniques and cooperation principle theory, this research is a qualitative study with descriptive analysis. It was discovered that the most common politeness method is positive politeness. The findings show that language learners should study civility and cooperation to improve their communication skills.

Eventually, Liua and Ren (2020), in their study, examined the many methods of delivering positive and negative information in English business letters, as well as the implementation of the politeness concept. The method is applied from particular to general, from point to surface to analyze, and from analyzing an English business letter to a class of English business letters, and it is discovered that the politeness principle is embodied in both positive and negative information transmission.

However, the current study is novel since no work has yet been conducted on Soran university students, located in Erbil/ Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and it is an attempt to approach the notion of politeness and daily use of language in formal context among Faculty of Arts EFL Kurdish Learners (i.e. who speak different dialects of the Kurdish language, having different cultural backgrounds (tribal, rural, urban, civilized). It tries to explain the politeness phenomenon and how it is treated and reflected by the students in terms of gender and social status.

## Methodology

### Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that, in a formal context, English Kurdish language learners, at Soran University, Faculty of Arts, English Department, employ politeness but the strategies of politeness employed may vary in terms of gender and social status.

## Research Method

The current study adopted a descriptive quantitative method to analyze the data since it aims to collect measurable data in order to do numerical analysis on a population sample. It's a

common market research instrument that lets researchers gather and characterize the current state of a variable or phenomena.

The data is collected through a questionnaire consisting of five questions with multiple choices. The researchers distributed the questionnaire to nonrandom selected 40 learners: 20 females and 20 males at Soran University, Faculty of Arts, and the participants spoke different dialects of the Kurdish language, had different cultural backgrounds and were from different stages of the Department of English.

## Participants

The participants of the study are EFL Kurdish learners from the Faculty of Arts – Soran University. They are from different stages of the Department of English, 40 non-randomly selected learners participated; 20 males and 20 females.

## Instrument

Instruments used for collecting the data is a questionnaire consisting of five questions, given to three experts, holding PhD and MA, in linguistics of different languages, for the purpose of collecting their comments and feedbacks concerning the questionnaire format. Then, SPSS Software version (25) is used for providing a statistical result of the politeness strategies used by the participants of the study.

## Procedure

Participants were given the questionnaire form and required to express their opinions, via ticking one of the multiple choices related to each question, according to the identified situations, in the formal setting, to help the researchers examine the EFL Kurdish learners' use of politeness strategies with their classmates and teachers. Moreover, it is authenticated that all students replied to the questions willingly and honestly. In addition, it is authenticated that all students had enough time to thoughtfully reflect on each separate question.

## The model of the study

This study adopted Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978) for analyzing the data; trying to reach at the confirmation of the hypotheses made. That is, this theory is employed to analyze the replies gathered, through the strategies used by the EFL Kurdish learners while answering the questions put in the questionnaire. However, this theory is also used to determine how universal it is, as well as if it can be applied to the Kurdish speakers of English (i.e. learners) while taking into consideration the social status and gender differences.

## Results and Discussion

The following tables report the results of how Kurdish English language learners employed politeness strategies at Soran University/Faculty of Arts/English Department

Table 1: Politeness strategies used by male students with their teachers and classmates

| Questions |           | Politeness strategies |                     |                     |                 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|           |           | Bald on record        | Negative politeness | Positive politeness | Bald-Off record |
| Q1        | Teacher   | 0                     | 3                   | 16                  | 1               |
|           | Classmate | 14                    | 2                   | 1                   | 3               |
| Q2        | Teacher   | 1                     | 2                   | 14                  | 3               |
|           | Classmate | 17                    | 2                   | 0                   | 1               |
| Q3        | Teacher   | 1                     | 6                   | 13                  | 0               |
|           | Classmate | 14                    | 1                   | 2                   | 3               |
| Q4        | Teacher   | 1                     | 1                   | 17                  | 2               |
|           | Classmate | 17                    | 2                   | 0                   | 1               |
| Q5        | Teacher   | 1                     | 1                   | 16                  | 0               |
|           | Classmate | 14                    | 1                   | 3                   | 2               |

Table 1 shows that different strategies are used by male students when answering question 1; Bald on record is used (zero time) with teachers and (14 times) with classmates, positive strategy (16times) with teachers and (1 time) with classmates, negative strategy (3 times) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates and bald off-record (1 time) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates. Regarding answering question 2, again different strategies are employed by male gender as Bald on record (1 time) with teachers and (17 times) with classmates, positive strategy (14 times) with teachers and (zero time) with classmates, negative strategy (2 times) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates, and bald off-record (3 times) with teachers and (1 time) with classmates.

Moreover, question 3 is also answered through different strategies; bald on record (1 time) with teachers and (14 times) with classmates, positive strategy (13 times) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates, negative strategy (6 times) with teachers and (1 time) with classmates, and bald off-record strategy (zero time) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates. Moreover, question 4 is answered by using different strategies as bald on record (1time) with teachers and (17 times) with classmates, positive strategy (17 times) with teachers and (zero time) with classmates, negative strategy (1 time) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates and bald off-record strategy (2times) with teachers and (1 time) with classmates.

Eventually, question 5 is also answered via the employment of the strategies; Bald-on record (1time) with teachers and (14 times) with classmates, positive politeness (16 times) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates, negative politeness (1 time) with teachers as well as (1time) with classmates, and bald-off record (zero time) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates.

Table 2: Politeness strategies used by female students with their teachers and classmates

| Questions |           | Politeness strategies |                     |                     |                 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|           |           | Bald on record        | Negative politeness | Positive politeness | Bald-Off record |
| Q1        | Teacher   | 0                     | 2                   | 17                  | 1               |
|           | Classmate | 14                    | 2                   | 3                   | 1               |
| Q2        | Teacher   | 1                     | 3                   | 14                  | 2               |
|           | Classmate | 13                    | 1                   | 2                   | 4               |

|    |           |    |   |    |   |
|----|-----------|----|---|----|---|
| Q3 | Teacher   | 1  | 3 | 16 | 2 |
|    | Classmate | 14 | 2 | 1  | 3 |
| Q4 | Teacher   | 0  | 2 | 17 | 1 |
|    | Classmate | 14 | 1 | 3  | 2 |
| Q5 | Teacher   | 1  | 2 | 14 | 1 |
|    | Classmate | 13 | 3 | 3  | 1 |

Table 2 depicts different strategies that are employed by female students when answering question 1; Bald on record (zero time) with teachers and (14 times) with classmates, positive strategy (17 times) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates, negative strategy (2 times) with teachers and (2times) with classmates and bald off-record (1 time) with teachers and (1 time) with classmates. Regarding answering question 2, again different strategies are employed by female gender as Bald on record (1 time) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates, positive strategy (14 times) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates, negative strategy (3 times) with teachers and (1 time) with a classmate, and bald off-record (2 times) with teachers and (4 times) with classmates.

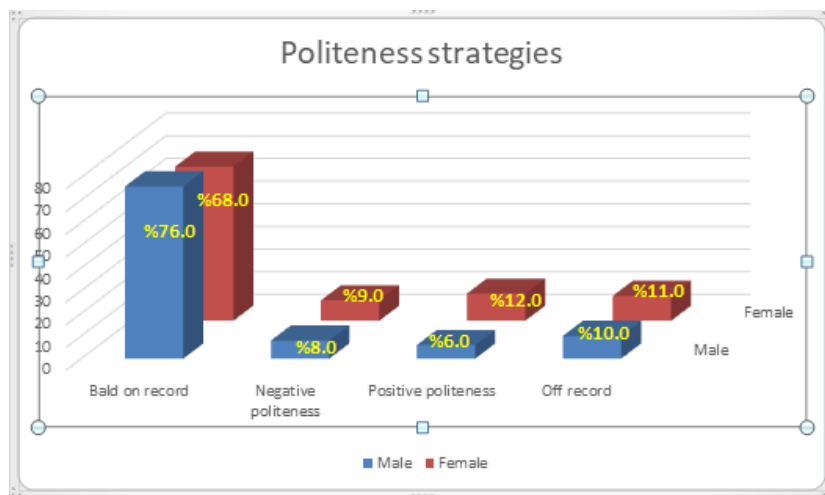
Moreover, question 3 is also answered through different strategies; bald on record (1 time) with teachers and (14 times) with classmates, positive strategy (16 times) with teachers and (1time) with classmates, negative strategy (3 times) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates and bald off-record strategy (times) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates. Further, question 4 is answered by using different strategies as bald on record (zero time) with teachers and (14 times) with classmates, positive strategy (17 times) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates, negative strategy (2 times) with teachers and (1 time) with classmates, and bald off-record strategy (1time) with teachers and (2 times) with classmates.

Finally, in answering question 5, again different strategies are used by different students. That is, they used bald-on record (1 time) with teachers and (13) times with classmates, positive politeness is used (14 times) with teachers and (3times) with classmates, negative politeness (2 times) with teachers and (3 times) with classmates, and the last strategy bald-off record is used (1 time) with teachers, as well as (1time) with classmates.

Table3. The frequency of politeness strategies used by male and female students with their classmates

| Gender | politeness strategies |                     | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|        |                       |                     |           |         |               |                    |
| Male   | Valid                 | bald on record      | 76        | 76.0    | 76.0          | 76.0               |
|        |                       | negative politeness | 8         | 8.0     | 8.0           | 84.0               |
|        |                       | positive politeness | 6         | 6.0     | 6.0           | 90.0               |
|        |                       | bald off record     | 10        | 10.0    | 10.0          | 100.0              |
|        |                       | Total               | 100       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |
| Female | politeness strategies |                     | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|        | Valid                 | bald on record      | 68        | 68.0    | 68.0          | 68.0               |
|        |                       | negative politeness | 9         | 9.0     | 9.0           | 77.0               |
|        |                       | positive politeness | 12        | 12.0    | 12.0          | 89.0               |
|        |                       | bald off record     | 11        | 11.0    | 11.0          | 100.0              |
|        |                       | Total               | 100       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Figure1. The frequency of politeness strategies used by male and female students with their classmates



The frequency of using politeness strategies by male and female learners was shown in figure 1 and based on this chart; learners of both genders preferred using bald on record strategy more than other strategies with their classmates.

Generally, the first objective of this study is finding out the employment of politeness strategies by EFL learners at Soran University- Faculty of Arts. The findings depict that all (40) respondents used politeness strategies, in a formal context, but they are treated differently by different students in different contexts (i.e. with teachers and classmates).

The second and the third objectives of the current study are figuring out if there is a difference in the frequency in terms of both gender and social status. The results show that male students employed bald-on record (4times; %4.0), negative politeness (13 times;% 13.0) , positive politeness (77 times;%77.0), and bald off-record (6times;%6.0)with their teachers, while female students used bald-record(3 times;%3.0), negative politeness (12 times;%12.0), positive politeness (78 times;%78.0), and bald-off record (7 times;%7.0).

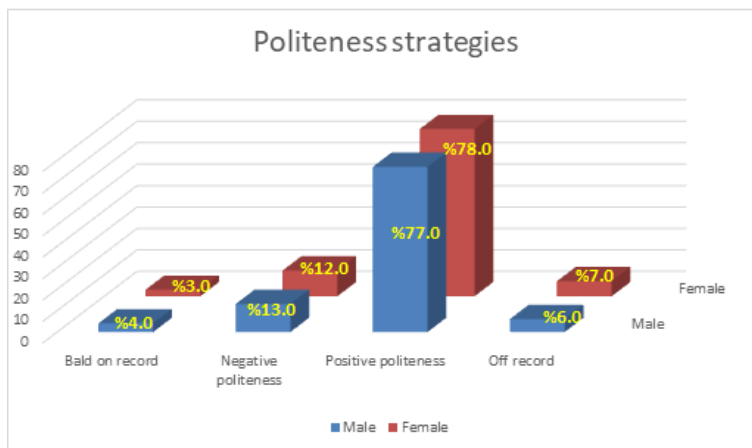
However, male students used bald-on record (76 times;%76.0), negative politeness(8 times; %8.0), positive politeness(6 times;%6.0), and bald-off record( 10 times;%10.0),while female students used bald-on record(68 times;%68.0), negative politeness(9times;%9.0), positive politeness (12times;%12.0), and bald off-record(11tmes;%11.0)with their classmates.

All in all, this shows that there is a slight numerical difference in the frequent use of the strategies of politeness between male and female students when interacting with their classmates and teachers. It is also worth mentioning that the great difference lies in the selection of a specific type of strategy used by male and female students in terms of social distance. That is, they (male and female students) most frequently used bald-on records (%76.0 by males and %68.0by females) when interacting with their classmates, and used positive politeness strategy (%77.0 by males, and %78.0 by females) when they interact with their teachers.

Table4.The frequency of politeness strategies used by male and female students with their teachers

| Gender | politeness strategies | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Male   | Valid bald on record  | 4         | 4.0     | 4.0           | 4.0                |
|        | negative politeness   | 13        | 13.0    | 13.0          | 17.0               |
|        | positive politeness   | 77        | 77.0    | 77.0          | 94.0               |
|        | bald off record       | 6         | 6.0     | 6.0           | 100.0              |
|        | Total                 | 100       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |
| Female | valid bald on record  | 3         | 3.0     | 3.0           | 3.0                |
|        | negative politeness   | 12        | 12.0    | 12.0          | 15.0               |
|        | positive politeness   | 78        | 78.0    | 78.0          | 93.0               |
|        | bald off record       | 7         | 7.0     | 7.0           | 100.0              |
|        | Total                 | 100       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Figure2. The frequency of politeness strategies used by male and female students with their teachers



Based on figure 2 above, learners of both genders preferred using positive politeness strategy more than other strategies with their teachers.

## Conclusion

Face threatening act occurs in interactions, in a formal context, and to lessen or avoid it, language users obey politeness strategies. That is, speaking politely helps to create an interpersonal relationship and keeps it on a friendly level. Throughout this paper, the researchers concluded that the participants of this study apply politeness strategies, but differently, in a formal context, when they interact with their classmates and teachers. That is, male and female learners mostly preferred using the bald on-record strategy in their interactions with their friends but positive politeness strategy, in their interactions, with their teachers. It is also found that they took formality and familiarity into consideration.

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## Appendix

## The Questionnaire Questions

Soran University/ Faculty of arts/ English Department.



This is a questionnaire Questions over-politeness and daily use of language among EFL Kurdish learners at Soran University, English department

Male:20

Female:20

Stage:1,2,3, 4

Answer the questions according to the situations mentioned below. Choose an option from the following

**1. You want to go to the cafeteria, and invite your friend, how do you invite your friend? How about if you invite your teacher?**

- Let's eat something
- I will be grateful if you can eat something with me.
- I am sorry, but can we have lunch together?
- We have not had lunch together for ages.

**2. You did not understand what did your teacher explain, how do you tell your teacher to explain again? How about if you ask your friend?**

- Repeat this for me.
- I am sorry, but can you repeat it?
- I do appreciate it if you could please repeat it.
- Nothing is understood!

**3. You are on your way to attend a class and you are late. You realize that you have left your watch at home, your classmate who is wearing a watch passes by, how do you ask him/her about the time? How about if he/she is your university teacher?**

- What is the time? (Bald on record)
- I am sorry to bother you, time please?
- I wonder if you could please tell me the time.
- Has the lecture started?

**4. You lost your pen, how would you ask your classmate to give you one? How about asking your teacher?**

- Give me a pen.
- I am sorry, your pen please.
- I do appreciate it if you could give me your pen.
- I lost my pen.

**5. You want to make a call but you don't have a credit balance. How do you tell your classmate to give you his/her mobile? How about your teacher?**

- Give me your mobile.
- I am sorry, but can I use your mobile?
- I wonder if I could use your mobile?
- I can't make a call on my mobile phone!

## التأدب والاستخدام اليومي للغة في السياق الرسمي بين المتعلمين الأكراد للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: جامعة سوران نموذجاً

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الكلمات المفتاحية: التأدب، الاستخدام اليومي للغة، استراتيجيات التأدب، الجنس، الحالة الاجتماعية.



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### ملخص البحث:

تعتبر اللغة وسيلة يستخدمها الناس لتبادل الأفكار مع بعضهم البعض، وتعتبر المصدر الأساسي للتواصل بين البشر لأنها تلعب دوراً عميقاً في فهم العالم من حولهم وخارجهم. للتحدث بلطف وتجنب الأفعال التي تهدد الوجه، يستلزم من مستخدمي اللغة توظيف استراتيجيات التأدب. فالدراسة هذه تهدف إلى معرفة استراتيجيات التأدب التي يستخدمها متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية من الأكراد في جامعة سوران، وكذلك مدى وجود الاختلافات في توظيف هذه الاستراتيجيات من حيث الجنس الاجتماعي والوضع الاجتماعي. يتم جمع البيانات من خلال مقابلة منظمة تتكون من خمسة أسئلة. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 40 متعلماً من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كلية الآداب/ قسم اللغة الإنجليزية خلال العام الدراسي 2020-2021 إضافة إلى ذلك، اعتمدت هذه الدراسة طريقة مختلطة لجمع البيانات وشرحها. واستخدمت نظرية التأدب لبراون وليفنسون (1987) كالنموذج للدراسة، بالإضافة إلى الإصدار (25) من برنامج SPSS لتحليل وتصوير النسبة المئوية، وتكرار حدوث استراتيجيات التأدب التي يستخدمها الطلاب والطالبات مع زملائهم ومعلميهم في مواقف مختلفة. تظهر النتائج أن هناك اختلافات في استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات، في السياق الرسمي، من قبل المتعلمين الأكراد في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من حيث الجنس الاجتماعي والوضع الاجتماعي.