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Title:

Gender Differences in the use of politeness strategies in the classroom and its effect on self- confidence:

The case of first year EFL learners in the department of English at UMMTO.

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Dedication

We dedicate our work for the most beloved once dear parents who were as supportive as

anyone has never been with us, then to our best friends who stood up with us to

overcome the entire obstacles and to get through this wok and make it done

Thank you for the love support and pray

Acknowledgment

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Without forgetting about our beloved parents, brothers and sisters, we are extremely thankful for their support, for believing in us to overcome all the obstacles in order to finish our work, they stood up with us whenever we needed them, and words are just not enough to express our gratitude.

Last but not least, we would like to present our thanks to our friends for their constant encouragement and support.

List of abbreviations

CP: Cooperative Principle.

CDA: critical discourse analysis.

EFL: English Foreign Language.

FTA: Face Threatening Act.

HPT: Hypothesis.

NP: Negative politeness.

PP: Positive Politeness.

UMMTO: university Mouloud Mammeri Tizi ouzou

Abstract

The present study investigates male and female first year English language students use of politeness strategies in the classroom and its effect on their self-confidence. It seeks to determine gender differences in the use of politeness strategies in the classroom. This study is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). To conduct this study we used the Mixed Method Approach to gather qualitative and quantitative data. One hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed to fifty (50) girls and fifty (50) boys at the department of English of MMUTO and twelve (12) classroom observation sessions on a sample of two hundred and forty students (240). The data gathered from classroom observation were interpreted using qualitative content analysis, critical discourse analysis and Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies (1987). The data gathered from the questionnaires were interpreted using a computer software program called SPSS. The findings indicate that there is a significant difference between male and female students of the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University in the use of politeness strategies in the classroom and this affects their self-confidence. In the sense that female students use more positive and negative politeness strategies than male do.

Key Words: politeness, gender, self-confidence; politeness strategies, male and female students…

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❖ Statement of the problem

Politeness is one of the major concepts in the field of linguistics and a common phenomenon in every society. It is a relevant feature of human communication. Thus, conversations of politeness vary from one culture to another. Linguistic politeness has been seen as an important subject of study in the area of language use, especially regarding the gender differences.

In fact, EFL classroom is considered as a context for the use of politeness strategies in learners' language, since politeness has an important role in communication. Using polite expressions in a wrong way lead to misunderstandings and someone may get hurt. Thus, politeness strategies are crucial in EFL classrooms because of the impact they have on learner-teacher interaction. That is, students' polite behavior contributes to a better classroom management and the learners' motivation to learn the English language as well. Also, it conveys protection for learners' face.

To be effective communicators, EFL learners should master the five skills of the foreign language which are: reading, writing, listening, speaking and to know about the cultural background of that language. That is, EFL learners should acquire the linguistic competencies that permit them to read and write the foreign language. But, these skills are not sufficient to be an effective communicator of a language. For this, EFL learners should be equipped by the cultural knowledge or what is called pragmatic competencies which permit them to use that language in different situations and avoid misunderstandings with the listener. Hence, linguistic politeness is one way among others to promote learners' pragmatic competences. Thus, the

overall aim of EFL learners is not just to learn how to read or write the foreign language, but, to be able to use that language effectively in different situations without being misunderstood. For this, they should learn the politeness strategies and how to express and use the different speech acts.

Politeness has been considered as a basic topic in pragmatics which has attracted researchers' attention like Lakoff(1973), Fraster (1990) and Holmes (1995) importantly Brown and Levinson(1987) who established a theory in which they consider politeness strategies as a way to save the person's face.

Foreign language learning can be a great challenge for many language learners, and the lack of self- confidence prevents them from expressing themselves during interaction in the classroom. Moreover, many EFL students face difficulties when interacting with their teachers and classmates and this is due to linguistic, personal or psychological reasons. However, self- confidence helps students to appreciate their own worth and to trust their abilities.

A brief glance at the literature revealed that the use of politeness strategies differs from male and female learners as it is argued by several scholars as Holmes (1995) and Mills (2003). Moreover, many studies as Feltz (1988) and Lland (2003) revealed that the use of these strategies plays an important role in enhancing the learners' self-confidence.

This dissertation then, explores the extent to which the use of politeness strategies differs from male and female first year students of the English language department of MMUTO, and how such strategies enhance their self confidence.

❖ Aims of The Study

This research attempts to explore the influence of the difference between male and female learners in their use of politeness strategies and its effect on their self- confidence. Thus, it seeks to highlight the difference between male and female first year English language learners at the English language department of MMUTO in the use of politeness strategies and explain how these strategies may affect their self confidence in classroom. To investigate this topic we will focus on three main notions: gender, politeness and self confidence in order to achieve the two principal objectives of this study.

The first objective is to know the difference between boys and girls in the use of polite expressions as cited in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). In other words, if female and male first year students of English language department at the MMUTO differ in the use of politeness strategies. The second objective is to explain how the use of these strategies affects the learners' self-confidence when interacting in classroom. This dissertation then will help us to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between politeness, gender and self-confidence.

❖ Research Questions and Hypothesis

For the sake of reaching an analysis to the collected data, we raise two main research questions:

1- Is there any significant difference between male and female first year students at the English language department of MMUTO in the use of politeness strategies in the classroom?

2-Does male and female learners' uses of politeness strategies enhance first year students' self-confidence?

To answer the research questions, we bring forward the following working hypotheses:

1- Hpt1- a: Yes, there is a significant difference between male and female first year students in the use of politeness strategies in the classroom.

   -b: No, there is no significant difference between male and female first year students in the use of politeness strategies in classroom.

2- Hpt2:-a: yes, the more first year students use of polite expressions in classroom the more they are willing to be self-confident.

   -b: No, the students' use of politeness strategies in classroom does not influence their self confidence.

❖ **Research Techniques and Methodology**

To conduct this research, we adopted the Mixed Method Approach. Our research problem requires both the qualitative and quantitative methods. In this study we investigate gender differences in the use of politeness strategies by first year EFL learners in classroom and how these affect their self- confidence.

To investigate this topic two tools of data collection were used. Thus, one hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed for thirty (50) boys and thirty (50) girls of first year students at the English language department of MMUTO. In addition to twelve (12) classroom observations conducted with two hundred and

forty (240) students, among them one hundred and seventy (170) girls and seventy (70) boys of first year students in the same context.

The quantitative data are presented and analyzed using computer software called SPSS, and the qualitative data are interpreted using Qualitative Content Analysis as well as Critical Discourse Analysis. Also, they were explained in reference to Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies (1987).

❖ Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation follows the traditional complex model of writing an academic research work. This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is a "General Introduction" where the aim of our investigation is described and in which it is mentioned the research questions and hypothesis. The second chapter is "Review of Literature" which provides the theoretical framework of our study and it is divided into two parts: politeness and self confidence. The third chapter is called" Research Design" and it consists of detailed description of the participants and the sitting of the investigation, also it presents the procedures of data collection and explains the method of data analysis. The fourth chapter is the "presentation of the Findings" in which the results gathered during the investigation are described, followed by the "Discussion" part in which the results are interpreted. Finally our research ends with a general conclusion.

Introduction

      This chapter reviews the theoretical background in relation to politeness strategies and self- confidence. It starts with an overview of linguistic politeness, an overview of the theoretical approaches to politeness, politeness and gender, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory(1987) where it is mentioned the notion of face and face relating acts, Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies, and politeness in classroom discourse. The second part involves the theoretical approach to self confidence.

I. Politeness

I.1. An Overview of Linguistic Politeness

      The English word "polite" has its origin from the Latin past participle "politus" that means "polished". Chejnova (2005:1910) argues that politeness is a part of of linguistic pragmatics and one of the functions of language used to communicate. Moreover, Lakoff (1973:297) explains that "*politeness usually supersedes*". That is, polite expressions precedes all the asks or needs that the speaker wants from the hearer; otherwise, it may cause misunderstandings or offend toward the hearer. Additionally, Lakoff (1973) characterizes politeness from the eye of the speaker's perspective by identifying three sub-types in:

      . * Formal or impersonal politeness.

      * Informal politeness (to give opinions).

      * Intimate politeness (to be friendly).

Watts et al (1992:3) explain that politeness research has not given an exact single definition of the term itself. The main focus is turned to the function of politeness in manipulating social interactions and interpersonal relations.

Lakoff (1990:34) defines politeness as *"a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange"*. In other words, people tend to interact in a polite way in order to avoid conflicts. Hence,Lakoff(1990) mentions two rules of politeness to reduce the potential of misunderstanding: The first is about to be "polite" in the sense to not impose ones opinion to make others feel good. The second is to be clear and avoid ambiguities that may cause breaks and misunderstandings, and it is the Grice's Cooperative Maxim.

Besides this, Holmes (1995:5) defins politeness as "a *behavior which actively express positive concern for others as well as non-imposing distancing behavior*". That is, politeness is a positive behavior that gives a positive and a good image of the self to others. In addition, Yule (2006) relies politeness to not be rude or careless about others' feelings, but, he considers it as the art to say the right thing at the right moment in order to not offend others, he states: "*we can think of politeness in general terms as having to do with ideas like being tactful, modes and nice to other people"* (Yule,2006:119). Furthermore, he argues that the notion of face is an important part of linguistic politeness. That is, politeness is the fact of being good with others when interacting. Therefore, it is to be aware and consider the other person's face.(Yule ,2006, 119).

Additionally, Leech (1989) claims that "*the more words you use, the more polite you are*". In this sense, he relates politeness to pragmatics and linguistics, since it is related to the number of words that the person uses.

It is important to mention that, Brown and Levinson in their politeness theory (1987) focus on reconstructing the speaker's intentions and needs when communicating(Brown and Levinson, 1987:8). For this, they investigate "*the nature of communication as a special kind of intention, designed to be recognized by the recipient*" Brown and Levinson (1987:7). Overall, in their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) related the nature of speech to the speakers' intentions while communicating and how they are interpreted by the hearer.

I.2. An Overview of the Theoretical Approaches to Politeness

Fraser (1990) has provided a general overview of the theoretical approaches to politeness by determining four basic types: Social Norm Approach, Conversational-maxim Approach, Face Saving Approach, and finally Conversational Contract Approach quoted in watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992:4-12).

The first one is the **"social norm approach"** which shows politeness as an attitude that fits a given society and it is approved by a community as the appropriate behavior in all social interactions.

The second approach is **"conversational maxim"** which is represented by two scholars R.Lakoff (1973) and G.Leech (1983). They took Grice's cooperative principles (CP) as their starting point and reinforced it with a politeness principle (pp). Lakoff(1973) considers the politeness principle as a pragmatic rule, whereas for Leech(1983) it is a set of several maxims working on a number of scales.

"Face saving" is the third approach. It is proposed in Brown and Levinson's theory(1987), in this view politeness in considered as a linguistics behavior to protect one's face. These social needs like respect for the social cultures which are

very important are seen to be the basic concern for determining polite behavior (Brown and Levinson,1987)

Finally, the last approach is **"conversational contact",** which is introduced by Fraser (1990), and it is described by Watts et al (1992:12) as *"operating within the then-current terms and conditions of the conversational contact"*. That is, the person should choose the right words when interacting. This approach has been criticized by Kasper (2004:37) for giving no explanations about the relationship between being cooperative and polite.

I.3. Politeness and Gender:

The study that involves the relation between politeness and gender is one of the most important subjects in linguistics; it has been a subject matter for many scholars as Lakoff(1973),Holmes(1990), Montgonery(1998) ,Mills(2003).and Segal(2004)

Lakoff (1973) in her work language and women's place (1973), argues that females' speech is marked by expressing uncertainty, tentativeness and lack of confidence. This is why women talk more in private to establish a sort of closeness, support and preserve intimacy .Whereas men are self-confident when talking in public because they are more concerned with social status and independence (Suciu Giulia 2012:2).Also, Lakoff(1995) selects some characteristics of *women's language* as raising intonation on declaratives, avoidance of strong swear words and taboos, the use of polite expressions like indirect request forms while giving orders, adjectives to express their feelings , lack of jokes, hedges and tag questions (cited in Mills p.165). That is, women have a refine and polite language to establish relationships, however,

men's language is considered as authoritative, forceful, confident to maintain status in society(Suciu Giulia 2012:2).

According to Segal (2004:3) *"gender is taken to refer to a culturally based complex of norms, values and behavior that a particular culture assigns to one biological sex or another"*. Segal(2004) wants to clarify that gender is related to the society in which male and female are expected to behave in a certain way.

Moreover, Montgonery (1998) claims that when talking to women, both male and female speakers use polite language. The investigation shows that females are often characterized by the use of more polite speech than men. However, this believes have been challenged by some scholars as Sarah Mills(2003).

Mills (2003) states that these declarations are just personal judgments. It is clear that the societies have evolved and also the relationship between men and women has changed too. There are women who speak harshly to men as it may be the opposite. Mills (2003) argues that certain aspects that are viewed to be polite are in general *"stereotypically gendered"* in a way that the society has the tendency to think that women are made to be polite and have good manners unlike men, it is natural for them to speak rudely but the truth is some women can as well misbehave or pronounce rude words (p.202).

Furthermore, Brown (1994) in a research of a community Mayan Indians in Tenejapa (South Mexico) viewed that women are polite (positive politeness) with friends then men do, and they show negative politeness in public. Brown (1994) also suggests that, since women's position in society has less power, they pay attention to

their own face and the one of their interlocutor. So, women use more polite strategies than men do.

Holmes (1990) argues that in general, women are more likely to express positive politeness in language use in comparison to men. Both women and men have different opinions regarding what is polite or appropriate for a given situation. Meanwhile, women give much importance to the feeling of their interlocutors. She stresses on the idea that women are more polite than men. In this context, she states (1995:6) *"women are much more likely than men to express positive politeness or friendliness in the way they use language"*. Additionally, Holmes (1995) claims that females are more polite than males since females in a conversation interrupt less than males do, also, women tend to speak using polite expressions as "Thank you" and apologize more than men do.

I.4. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987)

Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) is the most stressed on in this research and it is divided on two main parts: politeness strategies, the notion of face.

I.4.1. The Notion of Face

The notion of face was taken from Goffman's (1967) work, by the two scholars Brown and Levinson (1987) who consider face as an indispensible notion when talking about politeness.

The term " face" is used by scholars like Watts(2003) and Mills(2003) as a metaphor to show one's characteristics, qualities and abstract things in general such as honor, respect, the self esteem. Mills (2003:58) points out to the differences and the disagreements between scholars about the notion of face.

On one side, Goffman(1967) defins "face" by saying: *"it is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself, by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact"* (cited in Mills, 2003;213). In other words, he explains face as the description of the self image which the speaker or hearer would like and it is static (Mills,2003:58). On the other side Brown and Levinson(1987) view the notion of face as *" something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to interaction"* Brown and Levinson (1978:66). That is, for them face is related to the persons' feelings and it should be always present during an interaction which may be lost or developed. Besides, Brown and Levinson (1987:13) claim that face is a basic notion to understand politeness as a linked concept to the fantasy of virtue and honor, as well as staying away from shame. In fact people aim to maintain their public-self image when interacting(Yule,2009:59)

Furthermore, Face is divided into two related aspects: positive and negative face. **The positive face** is the individuals' desire to be appreciated and approved of in society(Watts ,2003: 86). It is the hope of someone to be accepted and welcomed in a community's interaction. For instance, to seek agreement as when a pupil gives an answer and the teacher says "thank you my child", here the learner's positive face is protected. According to Brown and Levinson (1987.P.66) positive face is *"the positive and consistent image people have to themselves and their desires for approval"*, so it is the positive self image that people have.

 The negative face which is viewed by Watts(2003:86) as *"desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition"*. The goal of the negative face is to respect individual's intimacy, Brown and Levinson (1987:66) stated that negative face is *"the basic claim to territories, personal pressure and rights to*

non-distraction". That is, it is the feeling of not being imposed upon. For instance, a student is asking the teacher for some clarifications after class, but, the teacher responds by saying " not now, I have something to do". So, the negative face which of the teacher may lead to FTA.

Moreover, Scollon and Scollen (1995) mentioned that there are two communicative strategies in order to perform either positive or negative face. **"**Involvement" and "independence"

The first is the other person's wants and concerns to be normal, then this person is considered as a member of a society whose ideas are supported and maintained by the other members, this is associated with positive face. The second is associated with negative face. It is the need to be respectful for another's welling and freedom of action. Speakers tend to use both kinds of politeness strategies which aim at selecting the right amount of interaction that will make the process of communication goes easier and appropriate (Scollon and Scollen ,1995:95)

Dimitrova-Glazci notes that:

> (…) "part of the problem in defining politeness comes from the lack of the universal, formals, and functional equivalence across cultures, from the different perception and motivations behind it across cultures, and the close and often difficult to untangle link between the folk understanding of politeness and the theoretical concept"(2002:1)

I.4.2. Face Relating Acts

When people interact, their face is constantly in danger; this is called *'face threatening acts'* (FTA). Yule (1996:1) states that people's behavior is performed to be respected, more importantly to respect their face wants. There are two face relating act: face threatening act and face saving act.

The **face threatening act** as defined by Watts (2003:274) is *"any act verbal or non verbal which threatens the way in which an individual sees her/himself or would like to be seen by others"*. Yule (1990) describes FTA as the fear of someone's face to be in danger. ***"Face saving act"*** is the second face relating acts, which is according to Yule (1990:61) is the possibility of protecting another's face. Consequently, it is important to take care of other individual's face (Goffman ,1967:27).

Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested four face threatening acts:

* Acts that threaten the audience's positive face: complaining, criticizing.

* Acts that threaten the speaker's positive face: accepting, confessing, complimenting.

* Acts which threaten the hearer's negative face: ordering or addressing.

* Acts that threaten the speaker's negative face: accepting offer or thanks.

I.5. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies (1987)

This investigation is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory (1987) which contains politeness strategies and the notion of face. It focuses on two notions: face and FTA. Brown and Levinson(1987) offer five politeness strategies:

1) Don't do face threatening act: this strategy has the highest degree of politeness in which the speaker tries his / her best to avoid FTA (Brown and Levinson, 1987:68). For instance, a student wants to go out during class but he/ she prefers not to ask the teacher and to stay until the end of the class it is a way to avoid face threatening act.

2) Positive politeness: here the speaker is showing that he or she values the interlocutor's positive face (Brown and Levinson, 1987:69). Therefore; the speaker minimizes the threat to the positive face. There are different types of positive strategies (e.g, Noticing or attending to hearer, Exaggeration). To illustrate, a student forgets his/ her book at home and it is necessary for a class. So, he/she asks a classmate by saying: " could you please lend me your book". This is a polite way to ask for a favor and it is positive politeness performed by a speaker to fulfill his/her wants.

3) Negative politeness: In this kind of strategy, the speaker minimizes the threat to the negative face to show respect and also not to show an imposition on the listener (Brown and Levinson,1987:70). In other words, negative politeness strategy includes indirectness and apologies (e.g. asking for permission, I'm sorry could you give me your pen, please?).

4) Off record: This strategy is the fact of being indirect. The speaker avoids responsibility for a face-threaten act. That is,, you indirectly ask someone to do something by commenting on something. Off record is described as a manifestation of the communicative act *"in such a way that is possible to attitude only one clear communicative intention to the act"(* Brown and Levinson, 1987:11).

5) Baldly On record: This is used when efficient communication is necessary and other things are more important than face. In this strategy the interlocutor reveals his/her intentions in the most direct and imperative way (Brown and Levinson, 1987:69). For instance, a student asks a classmate: "lend me your book". In this example, the learner is performing the on record strategy. It is often used between friends and closes. Otherwise, it is considered as rude behavior.

I.6. Polite Expressions used in Conversations:

According to Svarova(2008), there are several expressions to mark politeness that serve to keep good relations with both the listener and the speaker. Svarova(2008) claims that there are three main cases in which polite expressions are used. The first one is to show respect and values as: thank you, excuse me when facing a formal situation. The second case is when we speak to someone we don't know we use expressions such as: "Mr + family name", "madame". The third case is when the speaker use modal expressions like: "could I", "should I", "may I", to be more polite and less direct. Such expressions are often used when a person asks someone to do something (Savora, 2008). Moreover, kieszonkowy(2014) claims that modal verbs are often used in requests to express different degrees of politeness, and the past forms of these models are considered as a high degree of politeness. This scholar classified these modals according to their degree of politeness.

- "Can I" which is the most casual way to ask for permission. It is often used in informal situations either with closers, friends and family members

- "May I " is the most formal way to ask for permission in English. It is used when addressing to strangers and when there is a long power gap between the speaker and the hearer.

- "Could I" is more formal than "can I", it is a good way to ask for permission (kieszonkowy,2014:5).

In fact, these polite expressions aim to establish good relationships with other members of the society, and they become crucial in the educational setting and between the learner and his/her educational family.

I.7. Politeness in Classroom Discourse:

It is argued that, politeness in classroom discourse is very essential for two main reasons (AlFattah,2010:13). The first is that by using politeness strategies makes the mood which is established by the teacher in the classroom atmosphere as suitable during the learning process. Thus, it creates an appropriate relation between the teacher and the learner(AlFattah,2010:13). The learner may have the feeling of being accepted in the classroom, where he is not ashamed of committing mistakes. It is proved that the learner's progress in all the activities is due to the teachers' use of politness, and this enhances the learner to use politeness strategies as well (AlFattah,2010:13).

The second reason is about the learners' expressing of the themselves using polite strategies when interacting in the classroom either with the teacher or the classmates(AlFattah,2010:13). Because, it is a way to establish respectful relationships. The EFL learners' use of polite expressions like: please, sorry, do you mind and model in the classroom is very helpful (AlFattah,2010:13). Thus, students tend to have positive feelings towards the lesson and they are more motivated to participate in the classroom (AlFattah,2010:13).

II. self- confidence

II.1. Definition

The concept of self-confidence takes an indisputable place in the human behaviors' theories; it is viewed as an essential condition of human existence in modern days. In the words of Lland (2013:11) confidence is originated from the Latin word *confidencia* which means: *"to trust and to have faith"*. In the same context Neill (2005: 52) mentioned another definition *"confidence is partly about*

skill, about knowing what to do and how to do it". For the last decades self confidence has been a wide field of research. It was proposed to affect student's academic performance. Various terms like: 'self- confidence' 'self efficacy' 'perceived ability', and 'perceived competence' were introduced to describe a person's ability to achieve a certain level of performance. According to Neill (2005) both self esteem and self efficacy constitute self- confidence.

In addition, Feltz (1988) defined self- confidence as *" a general feature, it is a belief of a person that they can successfully achieve an activity and individuals trust their own judgment, ability, strength and decision "*.With this it is obvious that a person who has the self- confidence on himself can overcome any obstacle. Self- confidence results from the one who has faith in himself to succeed at any task based on their previous successes David Burns (1992:p.262).

II.2. Self- Confidence and Foreign Language Learning

Self- confidence is regarded as a cognitive human vision, which has an important role to achieve basic human requirements to illustrate happiness and success. Also, it is a crucial ingredient in school, personal and social lives(.Rubio ,2007). According to Rubio (2007) either success or failure originates from cognition which is the center of self confidence. Furthermore, he states that self confidence should be promoted in foreign language learning classrooms. In his book entitle "*Self Esteem and Foreign Language Learning*"(2007). He declares that in self- confidence studies, mostly two notions are taken into consideration. The first is to see self- confidence as a result of academic achievement. The second one is the connection between self- confidence and academic achievement. For instance, a student with low self confidence cannot realize good grades in foreign language learning (Rubio,

2007). Moreover, creating the right classroom environment where the learner will be able to participate and to give answers even if they are false will promote their self-confidence (Arnold,2007). Also, to improve learner's self confidence it better encourages them to speak freely in the classroom, and to propose suitable tasks for the learners. Arnold (2007) suggested that interaction between foreign language learners in the classroom can reach success and only self- confident learners can gain this success.

II.3. Gender, Politeness and Self- Confidence

Many psychologists have investigated the confidence levels for men and women. Also, outstanding researches were carried out about self confidence among boys and girls in the field of education as Sieler (1998) and Lips(1997). According to Sieler (1998) self-confidence is a characteristic which permits an individual to have a positive image about himself; Lips (1997:313) reports that *"female tends to attribute failure to lack of ability or to other stable causes, while men are more likely to attribute failure to external or unstable causes"* since self- confidence is about feeling self-worth to succeed at any task. Also, the female *"pattern of taking little personal credit for success and blaming themselves for failure leads to discouragement and decreased self- confidence)* (ibid). So, according to Lips (1997) women tend to question themselves while failing at a given task which leads to a lack of self- confidence or they quite when the first difficulty faces them.

Furthermore, in the education area studies were held in most countries with higher performing students to make a sort of comparison between boys and girls in relation to self- confidence and mathematics. It was found that girls have bad grades when comparing to boys, because, girls' level of self- confidence is low regarding their capacities to solve problems (Alseed Ahmed et al ,2015)

No previous studies were found about the relationship between self-confidence and politeness; however, Gasm Alseed Ahmed et al (2015) conducted a research about the impact of self-confidence on EFL Sudanese tertiary level students. It was found out that self-confident learners perform high scores in oral communication.Also, they agree on the evidence that learners communicate in the classroom using politeness strategies especially when interacting with their teachers. As a result, politeness expressions enhance them to participate and communicate with high self-confidence.

Conclusion

This chapter which is divided into two sections reviews the theoretical part of the notion of politeness and self-confidence. The first section started by an overview of linguistic politeness, followed by some of the most well known theoretical approaches to politeness, and then the relationship between politeness and gender. Moreover, it tackles Brown and Levinson's politeness theory(1987). Also, we mentioned the notion of face and the face relating acts, as well as, Brown and Levinson politeness strategies (1987)and the different polite expressions used to establish social relationships. The second section is about some definitions of self-confidence, self-confidence in foreign language learning and finally the relationship between gender, politeness and self- confidence.

Introduction

The present chapter is methodological. It is the research design of this study.It contextualizes the research, describes the procedures of data collection and analysis adopted to carry out this work in order to investigate male female first year students's of the English language department at MMUTO use of different polite strategies and its effect on their self confidence.

This chapter is devided into two (2) sections. The first section is about the Procedures of Data Collection that accounts for the participants, the sitting in which the research is occurred. The Mixed Method is the one used to collect qualitative and quantitative data with the two data tools: questionnaire and classroom observation. The second part is about the procedures of data analysis which are : the software program SPSS, Qualitative Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and relying on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory(1987).

I. Procedures of Data Collection

I.1 Participants and the Setting:

Data are collected during the academic year 2015/2016 at UMMTO in the Department of English. The general objective of this research is to investigate male and female first year students' use of polite strategies and its effect on the learner's self-confidence. The participants of the study are male and female first year students selected randomly.

I.2.Data Gathering Tools

To conduct this research we used two main tools. A Questionnaire and a classroom observation The questionnaire consists of both open ended and close ended questions. In addition to, a classroom observation, based on a check list that has six basic questions:

- Is the classroom atmosphere appropriate to learn English as a foreign language?

- Do EFL learners speak with confidence in the classroom?

- Who raise the hands more when giving answers boys or girls?

- When creating disturbance in the classroom, who apologizes first boys or girls?

- Who uses politeness expressions in the classroom more boys or girls?

- Do first year EFL learners participate with confidence in the classroom?

I.2.1. Learner's Questionnaire

The questionnaire is given to a sample of one hundred (100) first year students(fifty male and fifty female), and the other half are male learners. It is done to investigate their use of politeness strategies in the classroom and its effect on their self- confidence.:100) defined the questionnaire by saying:" a set of questions that are typed or written in a particular order". A questionnaire is a tool of data collection that will be distributed or sent to the participants who answer the questions in the space meant and then return it to the researcher(C.R. Kothari,2004).

The questionnaire of this research starts with an introduction that describes the aim of the study, it is divided into three sections: gender, politeness and self-confidence, it has twelve questions, open ended and close ended ones.

I.1.2. Classroom Observation

(Kothari C.R. 2004:100) defines .Classroom observation as an important tool for gathering data ,which is mostly used in researches related to behavioural sciences. Observation method permits to the researcher to collect reliable and valid data.

In this research the classroom observation is done for an academic purpose to investigate the use of politeness strategies by male and female first year learners, and its effects on their self-confidence. After obtaining an administrative agreement we enter the classes during the school year and to observe the learner's behavior . It will also help us to know whether there is a difference between male and female learners in the use of politeness strategies in the classroom, and to compare the results obtained from the learner's questionnaire.

 We conducted twelve classroom observations on two hundred and forty participants basing on a checklist.

II. Procedures of Data Analysis

 In order to analyze the data gathered, from the classroom observations and the questionnaire, we adopted the approach of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory (1987). To interpret the numerical data gathered from close ended questions of the questionnaire we use the software program SPSS, and to interpret learner's points of view gathered from the open ended questions we use the

qualitative method, Also, Critical discourse Analysis is used to interpret and analyze the observations' findings.

II.1 The Mixed Method Approach

It is used to conduct a research that contains both the qualitative and the quantitative methods.

- **.Quantitative Method**

The quantitative method uses strategies of inquiry like experimental and surveys, and collect data on predetermined instruments that involves statistical data Creswell (2003:18). To interpret the quantified data gathered from the learner's questionnaire we will use the software program SPSS.

- **Qualitative Method**

The qualitative method is used to interpret the data gathered from the open-ended non numerical questions of the questionnaire and the results obtained from the observation sessions. It is described as an affective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2003).

II.2. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) is based on the notion of face threatening act. They considered politeness theory as something universal, they gave a description for humans as rationally behaving subjects, whose aim is to maintain face. Face is vulnerable, that's why both participants in communication should try to

save each other's face. In this case politeness strategies are employed to save the hearer's face when FTA is not expected, so these strategies are: don't do the FTA, bald on record, off record, positive politeness and negative politeness. These five politeness strategies will be investigated in our work.

II.3 Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

According to Hsieh & Shannon (2005) defines the qualitative content analysis method as *"a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systemic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns"* (Hsieh & Shannon 2005:2). That is, Qualitative Content Analysis is a procedure of data analysis by which long texts are transformed into classified codes which are smaller and explicit units. The Qualitative Content Analysis in this investigation is used to analyze the open ended questions's results.

II.4 Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

It can be described as a procedure that analyses quantitative data and make the row and complex data more simple and clear, in order to obtain a precise analysis with valid and reliable research Yassine (2012). It is used in this research to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire.

II.5 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

It is defined as a qualitative method of analysis in social sciences, that permits to analyze different social situations in a critical way. it is a critical approach to text analysis (Wooffitt, 2005: 148). It is used in this research to interpret the

different behaviours and discourse of both male and female first year students of the English language department at MMUTO in classroom.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we described the population; the tools used in order to collect the date needed for this investigation. It consists of a questionnaire which is distributed equally between male and female first year learners at the Department of English UMMTO,.Also, a classroom observation done in the same location UMMTO the Department of English. Then, there is the data analysis which consists of Qualitative Content Analysis and Critical Content Analysis basing on the principles of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies(1987). The quantities data we used the software program SPSS, these are the two tools used to interpret the collected data.

Introduction

This chapter is empirical; it represents the results gathered from the questionnaire handled to one hundred (100) first year students at the English language department of MMUTO. In addition to twelve (12) classroom observations conducted in the same context. The results show a significant difference between boys and girls in the use of politeness strategies in classroom which have an impact on their self-confidence.

The findings are presented in percentages and displayed in tables, bar charts and pie charts for the sake of reliability and visibility. This part of research is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the results gathered from the questionnaires which are analysed using computer software named SPSS. The second part of the results consists those gathered from classroom observation sessions which are presented in sections and analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis.

I. Males' and Female's First year EFL Leaner's Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to one hundred(100) first year students equally between male and female at the Department of English of MMUTO . The questionnaire contains both close-ended and open-ended questions .The data

gathered were analyzed,　using the software program called SPSS, secondly the open-ended questions were interpreted relying on the theory of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies (1987) and Critical Discourse Analysis.

I.1. Section one: gender

	number	percentage
Boys	50	50%
Girls	50	50%

Table1: Gender of the participants.

II.2. Section Two: Politeness

Q1: Do you as a learner of English use polite expressions in classroom?

		Effectifs	Pourcentage	Pourcentage valide	Pourcentage cumulé
Valide		1	1,6	1,6	1,6
	yes	54	88,5	88,5	90,2
	no	6	9,8	9,8	100,0
	Total	61	100,0	100,0	

Table 2: The use of polite expressions by first year students.

We noticed from the questionnaire that the majority of first year students claim the use of polite expressions in the classroom. Thus, an average of 54% responder "Yes" .

Q2: Which one of these politeness expressions do you use in the classroom when learning English?
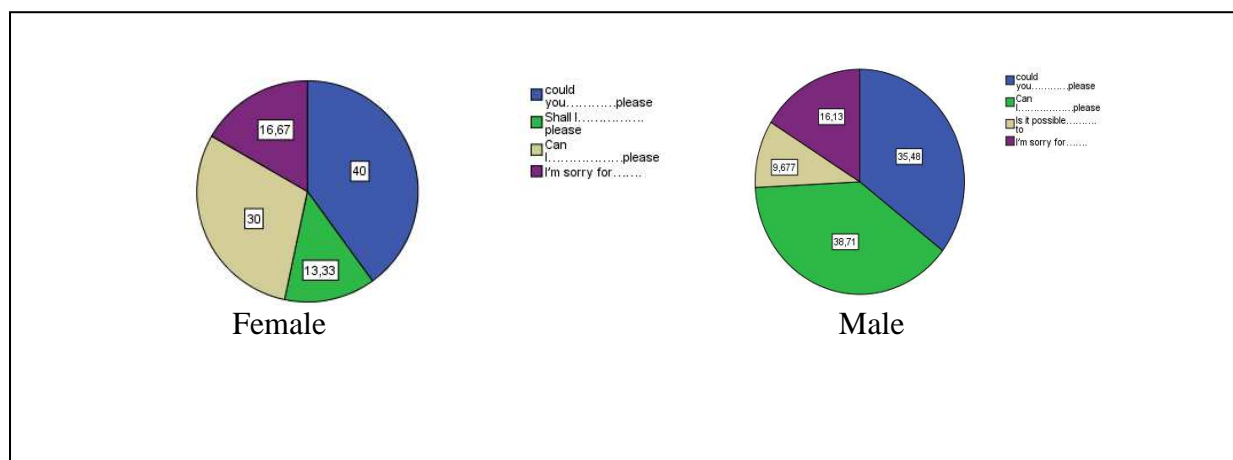

Diagram1: male and female choice to use politeness expressions.

In the (diagram 1) we noticed that 40% of female first year students tend to use the polite expression "could I", and only 30% of theme use the polite expression "can I". However, 38, 71% of male learners use the polite expressions "can I". Also, the diagram shows that only 9, 57% of males use the polite expression "is it possible to".

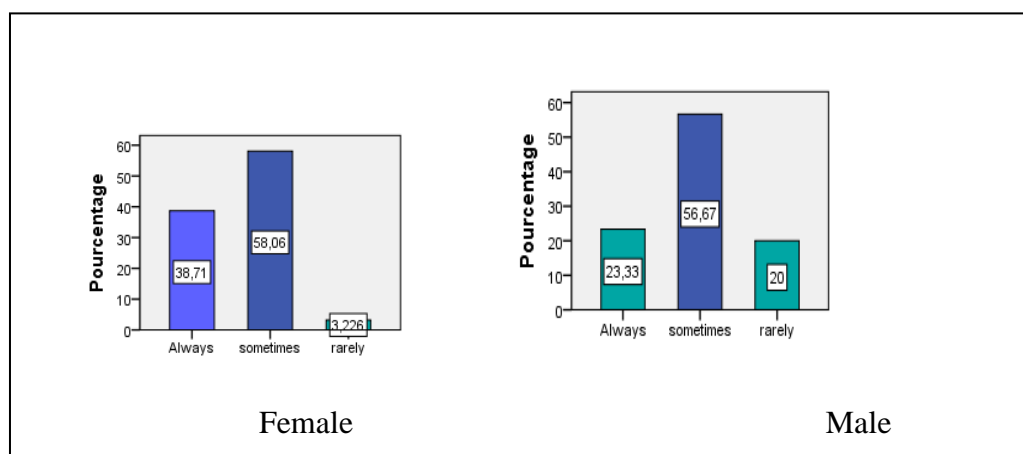**Q3:** To which extent do you use these politeness expressions?

Diagram2: male and female first year students use of politeness expressions?

We deduce from the second diagram that 23, 3% of male students *always* use polite expressions and of 20 % of them *rarely* use them, but 38, 71% of female learner *always* use polite expressions and only 3, 22% use theme *rarely.*

Why:

Responses%	boys		girls	
	numbers	**percentages**	**numbers**	**percentages**
-Attract teachers 'attention	**24**	**48%**	**10**	**32%**
-According to the situation	13	26%	11	22%
- Is my way of asking	10	20%	17	34%
-No answer	3	6%	6	12%

Table3: The reason of using polite expressions by male and female students

22% of female first year students use polite expressions sometimes, but it depends on the situation they are involved in the classroom. As well 26% of male first year learners. Also, 34% of female learners use polite expressions when interacting in the classroom to obtain their needs and wants in a respectful way. Meanwhile, 48% of male first year learners tend to use polite expressions just to attract the teacher's attention.

Q4: You have a course in English at 14:00 AM, but you enter 15mn late, what will you do?

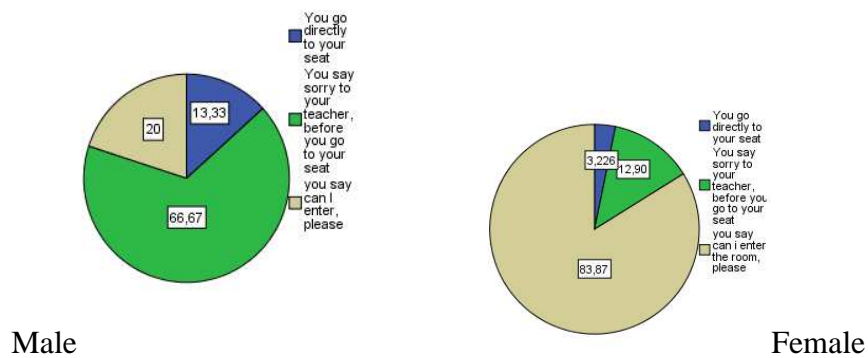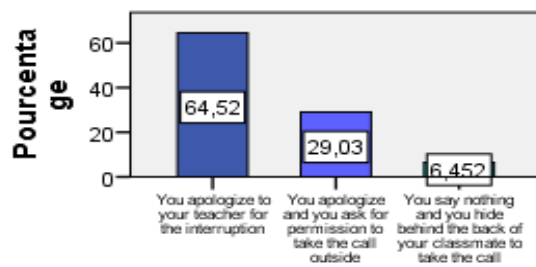Male   Female

Diagram3: male and female performing the FTA.

In the (diagram3), 66, 67 % of male first year students tend to apologize for being late and join their sits, and 83, 87 % of female first year students ask for permission by saying "can I enter the room ,please". Thus, 13, 33 % of them enter directly and join their sits, in comparison to female learners this strategy is only used by 3, 22%.

Q5: Your phone rings in the middle of a lesson of English, what will you do?
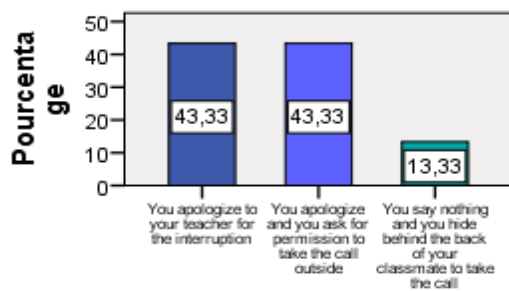
male   **female**

Diagram4: male and female politeness behavior

The (diagram4) shows that 43, 33 % of male students answered by apologizing for the interruption and 64, 52 % of female students have made the same choice. However, 13, 33% of male students responded by saying nothing and hiding behind a classmate to take the call and only 6, 45% of female learners use this strategy.

Q6: Your teacher of English blames you for something you did not do, what will you do?

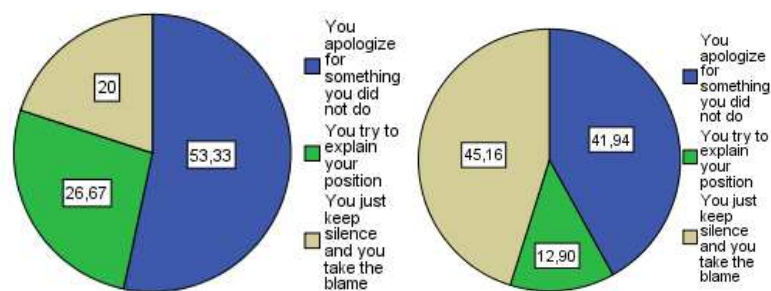|	
Male	Female

Diagram5: male and female first year students' use of positive and negative politeness.

The (diagram5) demonstrates that 53, 33 % of male students apologize they did not do, and 26, 67 % will try to explain their position. 45, 16% of female learners prefer to keep silent and take the blame..

Q7: what is your opinion about using politeness formulas in the classroom?

Why:

The use of polite expressions	boys		girls	
	Numbers	percentages	numbers	percentages
It is important and necessary	10	20%	29	58%
To make the classroom atmosphere harmonious	15	30%	11	22%
To be respectful	12	24%	5	12%
An obligation in the classroom	10	20%	4	8%
No answer	3	6%	1	0%

Table4: Students' opinions about the use of polite expressions in classroom

This table show that female first year students argue that the use of polite expressions in classroom is very necessary and important. Also, it is an effective way to make the classroom atmosphere harmonious for a better education, as one female student responded by "*politeness is very important to use not only in the classroom but everywhere since it affects the person's education*". Furthermore, the use of polite expressions permits them to be respectful and to be respected and this make them feel confident and relaxed when interacting in the classroom. Moreover, male students view the use of politeness expressions as an obligation to do in the classroom to facilitate the learning process and to keep order in the classroom, as one male learner declares: "polite *expressions allow them to show respect for the teacher and the classmates*".

II.3. Section three: self- confidence

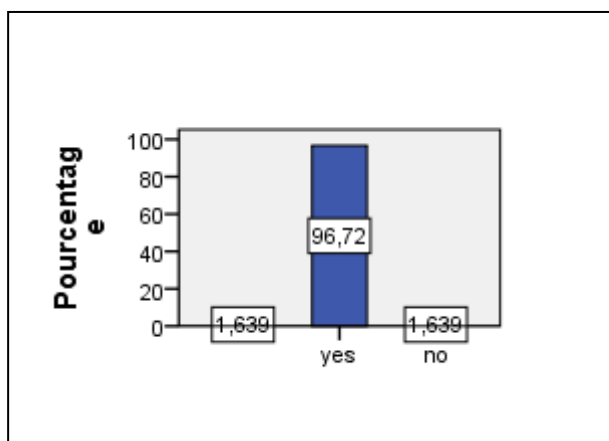**Q1:** Do you feel good about yourself?

Diagram6: male and female first year students self esteem.

 The (diagram6) demonstrates that 96, 72 % of first year learners have a good feeling about themselves, and only few of them (1, 63 %) gave the answer "No".

Q2: does success arise from being self confident?

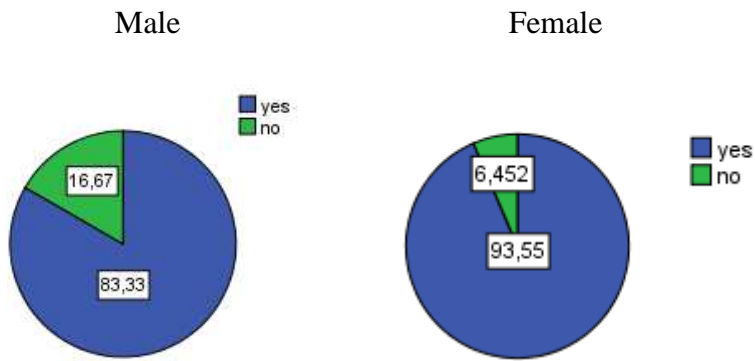Male   Female

Diagram7: male and female first year students' perception of self- confidence and success.

The (diagram7) shows that 93, 32 % of female first year students believe that success happens when being self confident, and 83, 33% of male learners share the same opinion. But, 16, 67%   of them claim that self-confidence does not raise the level of success.

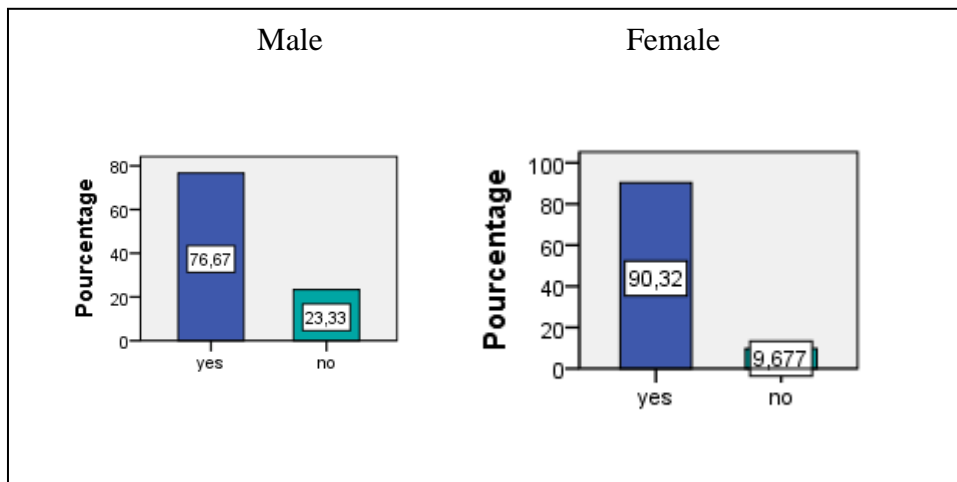**Q3:** Do you get confident when you use polite expressions in the classroom?

Diagram8: male and females first year students use of politeness expressions and self- confidence.

The (diagram 8) reveals that 90, 32 % of female first year students agreed that the use of polite expressions in the classroom make them feel more confident in

the classroom. Only 9, 67 % gave the answer of "No". As for male first year students, 23, 33 % of them think that using politeness formulas does not help them to be- confident.

Q4: When you use politeness expressions in the classroom, how does it make you feel?
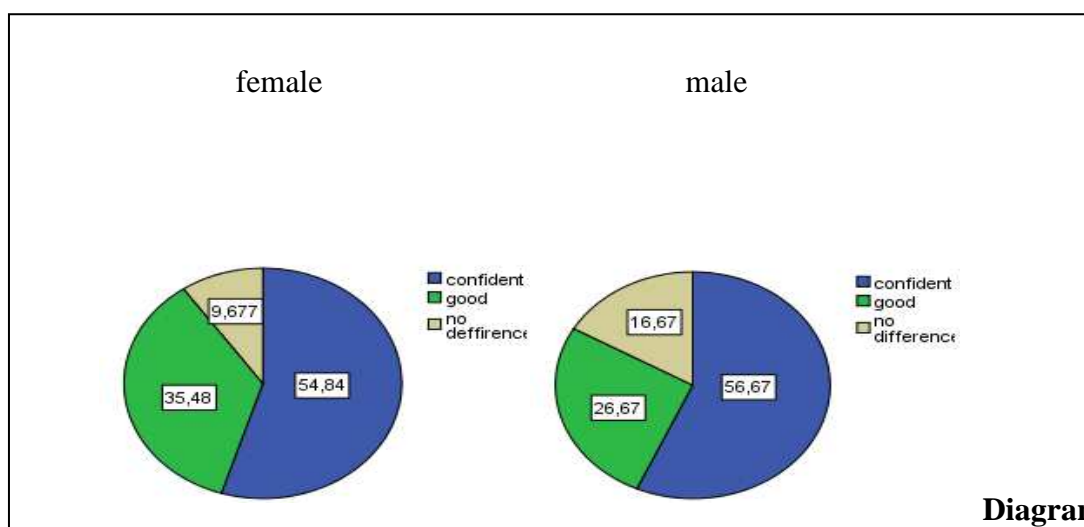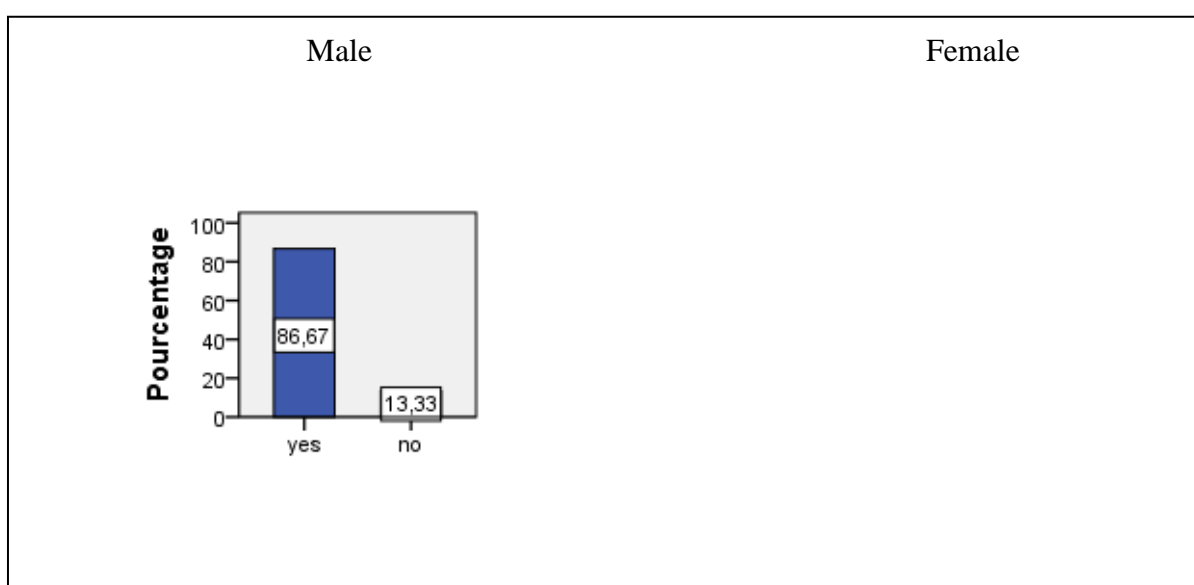

Diagram9: male

and female first year students feeling about using politeness expressions.

The (diagram 9) shows that 54,84 % of female learners feel confident when they use polite expressions, and 56, 67% of male learners feel confident and only 9, 67% of female learners felt no difference.

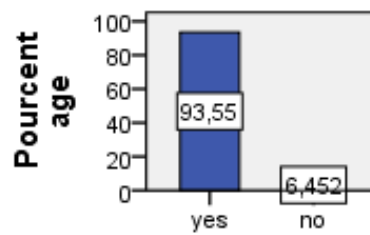**Q5:** Does being polite increase your self- confidence?

Diagram 10: male and female first year students 'opinion about politeness and self-confidence.

It is clear from the (diagram10), that 93, 55 % of female first year students self-confidence arises when being polite.

Q6: do you think that using polite expressions makes the interaction in the classroom easier?

the use of polite expressions and self-confidence	girls		boys	
	numbers	percentages	numbers	percentages
to protect positive face	17	34%	15	30%
Avoid conflicts	15	30%	14	28%
Show respect for the teacher	8	16%	10	20%
Lead into successful communication	11		10	22%20%

Table 5: Students' opinions about politeness and interaction

The table reveals that the majority of students find that the use of politeness is important when interacting in the classroom. They justify their responses by the fact that such expressions protect learner's positive face, to avoid conflicts with the teacher or the classmates. Some female learners responded by "yes, because it shows respect for the teacher", and one of male learners claim that politeness expressions

lead into a successful communication. Moreover, being polite in the classroom is a sign of respect toward the teacher and the classmates, which makes it an indispensable principle of any going conversations.

III. Findings of the classroom observations

In addition to the questionnaire twelve classroom observations were conducted on a sample of two hundred and forty (240) first year students at the English language Department of MMUTO. These observations are made with reference to a checklist that contains six elements that are essential to answer the research questions of this investigation which are as follow:

1.Is the classroom atmosphere appropriate to learn English as a foreign language?

This part is to know about the classroom atmosphere and the aspects that may influence the well running of the classes. This is based on the bad or good behaviors concerning both students and teachers as being rude, harsh or impolite.

These observation sessions revealed that in the twelve sessions, all the teachers when entering the classroom salute their students. Some teachers use directives to address their students (male teachers). But, most of the times they speak politely and use polite formulas as "good morning", "good afternoon", " please, join your sits". In addition to this, most of the learners show respect to their teachers by taking their sits when he/ she enters the class. Also, they have not shown rude, harsh and impolite behaviors during all these sessions.

2.Do EFL learners speak with confidence in the classroom?

This part aims to analyze the first year students ' interactions in the classroom to know whether they are confident when interacting with their teachers. It was observed that   speaking English for first year students is still new. So, the large

majority of both male and female students show hesitation, shyness and sometimes a lack of interaction. It is important to mention that most of the boys interact rarely by themselves. Thus, they interact when they are obliged or asked by the teacher to answer a question or to give a comment, despite the teachers' instructions they keep silent. For instance, in one of the sessions the teacher asked a boy to answer a question about his good experience in the past. The student was silent and did not give an answer. However, female students show hesitation when speaking but they often take the alternative to speak or ask.

3.Who raise the hands when giving answers boys or girls?

This part is concerned with polite behaviours that ensure the classroom organization and good teacher-student interaction and relationship as raising hands to speak or answer teachers' questions. It is observable that female first year students behave in a positive way during courses than their male counterparts do. Therefore, they do not interrupt their teachers when explaining the lesson, and most of the times they raise their hands to answer the teachers' questions, give comments and ask for more explanations. In contrast to male first year students who tend to answer in a random way by giving answers without raising hands.

4. When creating disturbance in the classroom, who apologizes more boys or girls?

This part is concerned with disruptive behaviours that affect the student-teacher relationship, and the politeness strategies that the students use to save their face. It contains some disruptive students' behaviours (as phone ringing, arriving late that…) that should be accompanied with the appropriate polite behavior to save one's face and avoid FTAs.

All the observation sessions are marked by students who entered the room late, and each one behaved differently after this. For instance, in oral module two girls arrive late and they said to the teacher "sorry, can we come in" it is negative politeness strategy. However, most of the boys only knock the door then enter directly to the classroom It is what Brown and Levinson's (1987) call bold on record strategy. Also, it is viewed that when the phone rings in the middle of the course in five sessions. Female students apologize directly for the interruption to minimize the FTA; however, male first year students just switch off their mobiles.

5.Who uses polite expressions in the classroom more boys or girls?

This part is about the degree of use of different polite expressions by male and female students in classroom such as requests, apologies, thanks, and greetings. From the observations, it was clear that female first year students use more such polite expressions more than males do. The majority of female students use polite expressions with the modal "May I", and some others with "can I" and some of them with"could I". However, male students use "can I" and show more directive speech.

6.Do first year EFL learners participate with confidence in the classroom?

This part aims to show the students' self-confidence when interacting using politeness strategies and polite expressions. The results reveal that in this context reveal that female students show more self-confidence when using polite expressions or take one of the politeness strategies in classroom. For instance,

 A female student: can I do the last exercise, please?

The teacher of grammar: yes, of course

It was clear that girls do perform with extreme self confidence when participating, and always get positive response from their teachers when doing so. in contrast, male first year students don't use politeness expressions like girls do that is why they have the tendency to speak in a directive way.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the statistical data gathered from the questionnaire and classroom observation sessions to investigate the gender difference in the first year students' use of politeness strategies and how the use of these strategies affect the students' self-confidence when interacting in classroom. The results obtained show that male and female first year students' at the English language department at MMUTO use differently the politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Thus, female students are perceived to be more polite in classroom than their male counterparts. Also, it was found that the use of such strategies and expressions affect the learners' self- confidence. These results will be explained in details in the next chapter.

Appendix 1: learner's questionnaire.

Dear students

Please answer these questions with a complete objectivity, we ensure you that it is done for an academic purpose, to investigate the use of politeness strategies by first year EFL male and female learners and its effect on their self-confidence. Please tick your answer.

A) Section one: Background information

* Gender: female ☐   male ☐

B) Section two: ¨Politeness.

❖ Situation 1:

1- Do you as a learner of English use politeness expressions in classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2- Which one of these politeness expressions do you use in the classroom when learning English?

   a) could you…………please ☐

   b) Shall I……………please ☐

   c) Can I………………please ☐

   d) Is it possible……….to ☐

   e) I'm sorry for……. ☐

3-To which extent do you use these politeness expressions?

Always ☐   sometimes ☐   rarely ☐

Why?...

....

❖ Situation 2:

4- You have a course English at 14:00 AM, but you enter 15mn late, what will you do?

    a) You go directly to your seat ☐

    b) You say sorry to your teacher, before you go to your seat ☐

    c) You say can I enter, please ☐

❖ Situation 3:

5- Your phone rings in the middle of a course of English, what will you do?

    a) You apologize to your teacher for the interaction ☐

    b) You apologize and you ask for permission to take the call outside ☐

    c) You say nothing and you hide behind the back of your classmate to take the ☐ call

❖ Situation 4:

6-Your teacher of English blames you for something you did not do, what will you do?

    a) You apologize for something you did not do ☐

    b) You try to explain your position ☐

    c) You just keep silence and you take the blame ☐

7-What is your opinion about using politeness formulas in the classroom?..........

C) Section three: Self confidence

1-Do you feel good about yourself?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

2- Does success arise from being self confident?

Yes ☐   No ☐

3- Do you get confident when you use politeness expressions in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

4-When you use politeness expressions in the classroom, how does it make you feel?

Confident ☐   good ☐   no difference ☐

5- Does being polite increase your self- confidence?

Yes ☐   No ☐

6-Do you think that using politeness expressions makes the interaction in the classroom easier?..

....

Appendix 2: check list of the classroom observation.

✓ Is the classroom atmosphere appropriate to learn English as a foreign language?

✓ Do EFL learners speak with confidence in the classroom?

✓ Who raise the hands when giving answers boys or girls?

✓ When creating disturbance in the classroom, who apologizes first boys or girls?

✓ Who uses politeness expressions in the classroom more boys or girls?

✓ Do first year EFL learners participate with confidence in the classroom?

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