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## Politeness of Teacher and Student Speech in English Language Learning at the Iraqi academic institutions: Pragmatics Overview

### A B S T R U C T

This study explores the politeness strategies used by teachers and students in English language learning at academic institutions in Iraq. It focuses on the pragmatic aspects of teacher-student interaction and explores how these strategies uphold social norms and create positive rapport in the English as a Second Language classroom. The research uses a qualitative research design, including classroom observations, interviews, and linguistic analysis of teacher and student speech. The findings reveal the importance of politeness in promoting effective communication and enhancing language learning outcomes. Teachers and students employ various politeness strategies, such as indirectness, mitigation, and positive politeness, to maintain social harmony and mitigate potential threats. These strategies are influenced by cultural norms, societal expectations, individual preferences, and language proficiency levels. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling and guiding students in politeness norms, enabling them to navigate different communicative contexts effectively. The findings have implications for English language teachers and curriculum developers, suggesting that integrating pragmatic instruction can help students develop linguistic competencies and pragmatic awareness, leading to more effective communication in English.

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أدب خطاب المعلم والطالب في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المؤسسات الأكاديمية العراقية نظرة عامة على  
البراغماتية

علي غافل حربي البعاج/ وزارة التربية / مديرية تربية القادسية / اللغة الانكليزية/ دراسات امريكية / علم اللسانيات  
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**الخلاصة:**

تستكشف هذه الدراسة استراتيجيات التهذيب التي يستخدمها المعلمون والطلاب في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المؤسسات الأكاديمية في العراق. وهو يركز على الجوانب العملية للتفاعل بين المعلم والطلاب ويستكشف كيف تدعم هذه الاستراتيجيات الأعراف الاجتماعية وتخلق علاقة إيجابية في فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. يستخدم البحث تصميم البحث النوعي، بما في ذلك الملاحظات الصفية، والمقابلات، والتحليل اللغوي لخطاب المعلم والطلاب. وتكشف النتائج عن أهمية التأدب في تعزيز التواصل الفعال وتعزيز نتائج تعلم اللغة. يستخدم المعلمون والطلاب استراتيجيات مختلفة للتأدب، مثل عدم المباشرة، والتخفيف، والتأدب الإيجابي، للحفاظ على الانسجام الاجتماعي والتخفيف من التهديدات المحتملة. وتتأثر هذه الاستراتيجيات بالمعايير الثقافية والتوقعات المجتمعية والتفضيلات الفردية ومستويات الكفاءة اللغوية. يلعب المعلمون دورًا حاسمًا في وضع نماذج وتوجيه الطلاب فيما يتعلق بمعايير الأدب، مما يمكنهم من التنقل في سياقات التواصل المختلفة بفعالية. النتائج لها آثار على معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ومطوري المناهج، مما يشير إلى أن دمج التعليم العملي يمكن أن يساعد الطلاب على تطوير الكفاءات اللغوية والوعي العملي، مما يؤدي إلى تواصل أكثر فعالية باللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرة تداولية، المداراة، خطاب المعلم، خطاب الطالب، تعلم اللغة الانجليزية، المؤسسات العراقية، الاتصال، بيئة تعلم اللغة، استراتيجيات المداراة، مواجهة التهديدات، الكفاءة اللغوية.

**1. Introduction**

Learning is the reality of communication that takes place in the teaching and learning process in class or class interaction. Class interaction is manifested in speech acts performed by speech participants (teachers and students). Speaking activities in class will be different from speaking activities in society naturally. In the classroom there are manners and politeness which are aspects of language that are expressed by a communication that is surrounded by various contexts. In classroom learning, speech events occur between teachers and students and it is difficult to separate them from language politeness. This is because learning English is aimed at fostering and developing the knowledge, skills, communication needed by students in pursuing education, and skills in the world of work. At

school, it is the teacher who plays a very important role in shaping language politeness for students. This is in line with the opinion of Yule who said: that politeness in an interaction can be defined as a tool used to show awareness of other people's faces( Yule 2014; 104).

In relation to the present research, Keith Allan (1986) examines the forms of politeness and politeness in learning English in the classroom and outside the classroom. The form of politeness was found by researchers, using declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences in speaking both in class and outside of class. In addition, the speaker and the speech partner always pay attention to the politeness principles proposed by Leech (1993) which are to put forward the six principles of politeness; (1) the maxim of wisdom, (2) the maxim of generosity, (3) the maxim of praise, (4) the maxim of humility, (5) the maxim of consensus, and (6) the maxim of sympathy. By using the six maxims, the politeness of the teacher and students both in class and outside the classroom can be increased. David Crystal (2008) examines the speech politeness of teachers and students in teaching and learning English interactions in the classroom, using declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences in commanding speech acts. By using declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences, the politeness of teachers and students is smoother and more harmonious. These two relevant studies, when linked to research conducted by researchers, are both studying the politeness of speech acts of teachers and students in learning English in the classroom, and by taking into account the six principles of politeness proposed by Leech (1993).

The politeness of the language of teachers and students in all the Iraqi Public and private academic institutions still needs to be considered, because it is influenced by environmental factors and socio-cultural factors and does not pay attention to the principle of politeness in speaking. Environmental factors in the household are the basis for the application of language politeness. Therefore, the

relationship between parents and children is always maintained in communicating or acting. So, the principle of politeness must solve this problem.

### **1.1. The formulation of this research problem is:**

The problem of the study is determined in the following main questions :

- 1) What are the types of politeness speech acts of teachers and students in learning English Normally used in all the Iraqi governmental and private academic institutions?
- 2) What is the politeness speech act strategy of teachers and students in learning English Normally used in all the Iraqi governmental and private academic institutions?

**The main questions can be divided into some sub-questions such as:**

**The first sub-question:** To what extent does the teacher develop some social values?

**The second sub-question:** Do the environment and society have a major role in influencing the student's politeness?

### **1.2. The purpose of this study:**

The aim of this research is to identify the students' politeness inside the public educational institutions and to shed light on their reactions and the moral level that they have acquired. On the other hand, I try to understand what is the role of the teacher, who is considered the head of the pyramid inside of the institutions in changing students' politeness.

### **1.3. The significance of the study :**

The study gains its importance through the following.

1. The role and vitality of values in the educational process and their role in guiding the learner's behaviour. The study can provide an important tool for measuring the most important social values that teachers are keen on its development.

#### **1.4. The hypothesis of this study**

Since speech acts and sentences (as well as other linguistic units) are considered the fundamental unit of communication, it follows that there are many analytic links between the concept of speech actions and the speaker's meaning, the sentence's meaning, the speaker's intention, and so on.

### **2. Study of theory**

#### **2.1. Pragmatics**

Pragmatics studies the link between language and speech situation. Pragmatics studies language and context to explain language comprehension. The study of how speakers arrange what they say according to who they're speaking to and the circumstance.

According to Guy Cook , “pragmatics studies how context impacts language interpretation. Context's involvement in interpretation includes decreasing the space between alternative speech interpretations and encouraging successful interpretations” (Cook,1989).

Pragmatics is intimately tied to context, thus it will be fascinating to study instructors' and students' politeness in class according to the speaker's (teacher's) aim. Yule (2014) defines pragmatics as the study of speaker and listener meaning. This viewpoint permits the interlocutor to interpret the speaker's words. This pragmatic research requires that the listener hears the speaker's voice. Pragmatic theory is used to interpret interlocutor communication. The teacher's classroom

utterances are examined based on his aim. Teachers and students' directive and expressive utterances will be utilized as speech act standards. This form of speech behavior is studied pragmatically to determine its meaning.

## **2.2 Speech Component**

### **2.2.1 Speech Situation**

As a discipline of linguistics associated to communication events, pragmatics cannot be isolated from speech contexts, which give rise to speech. This relates to the idea that speech is the product of a circumstance. With the speech situation, the interlocutor may understand the purpose of a statement. And speech might transmit meaning or the opposite. The meaning of instructors' and students' polite classroom communication is changed to the occasion.

Yan Huang states that "An utterance's speech act is studied by examining its environment. A dialogue between a principal and an employee will be different than one between employees "( Huang ,2007).

### **2.2.2 Speech Events**

In speech events there are speech acts. The forms and types of speech acts can be found in everyday life. So, teaching and learning interactions between teachers and students in the classroom using language as a communication tool is a speech event. Yan Huang shows that defines speech events as the occurrence or ongoing linguistic interaction "( Huang ,2007).

### **2.2.3 Context of Speech**

Context is shared information between speaker and listener that leads to speech interpretation. Levinson (1983) defines context as any common knowledge background between the speaker and the speech partner that supports the speech

partner's understanding of what the speaker intended by a specific statement. Humans can detect speech actions based on knowledge or context. Language uses context. Context determines a statement's meaning and intent. Context influences language's communicative function. Understanding an utterance requires knowing its foundation. Situations, distances, locations, etc. can be linguistic contexts.

### **2.3 The Nature of Speech Acts**

Spoken acts are situation-specific speech activities. Mey (2001) says speech isn't characterized by psychological and social purposes beyond discourse. This speaking act is psychological and social. Speech act meaning determines the action. Speech actions are how speakers use language to communicate with others. This is consistent with language's purpose as a communication tool, which is to create intents and express emotions.

### **2.4 Learning Process**

The learning process serves students' skills, interests, talents, and various needs via teacher-student and student-student interaction. Students' language abilities in pronouncing articulation sounds or words to express, speak, and transmit thoughts, emotions, and ideas have adjusted to their competences so the learning process may flow smoothly. The learning process involves teacher-student contact and communication to attain learning objectives. Teachers and students are inseparable in learning. This involves direct communication.

## **3. METHOD**

### **3.1 Research Design and Type**

This type of research is qualitative research. This means that this study tries to carefully record all linguistic phenomena according to what they are. This research is descriptive qualitative, which is trying to collect information according to the

symptoms and the situation as it was at the time the research was conducted, and can describe systematically the politeness speech acts of teachers and students in learning English language in the classroom. Data obtained from observations (observations), and interviews. The results of data analysis can be in the form of an explanation of the situation under study and presented in the form of a descriptive description.

This research was conducted in some Iraqi governmental and private academic institutions in Some academic institutions in Iraq, including Al-Qadisiyah Governorate. The selection of this location was determined based on the consideration that is to the place where I taught and during the time I served as a teacher at some schools. The researchers discovered a variety of courteous speaking behaviors during the distribution of English language learning materials in the classroom. The location of this research was selected to observe directly the politeness speech acts used by teachers and students in learning English in Iraqi public and private academic institutions.

### **3.2 Data and Data Sources**

This study examines teacher and student speech, directive and expressive acts of politeness, directive and expressive acts of politeness strategies, and functions of directive and expressive acts of politeness as used by teachers and students in the English language learning process in Iraqi governmental and private academic institutions. Observations, recordings, and interviews provided instructor and student speech data. Speech observations made during exchanges between teachers and students in an English lesson. The classroom gathering information. The speech data of instructors and students in the English language learning process in the classroom includes characteristics of speech participants, speech themes,



environment, and time of speech. I used data from interviews with instructors to determine the best English politeness speech actions for communicating with kids.

### **3.3 Data Collection Method**

#### **3.3.1 Observation**

Observations in this study aimed to directly observe the types, strategies, and the function of polite speech acts of teachers with students, and students with students, so that they can understand the types, strategies, and functions of teacher-student communication that is both directive and expressive, student with student in the process of learning English in some selected academic institutions observed by listening, recording, and note taking ,as well as to the teacher and students while learning English. The primary data will be transcripts of teacher and student conversations in English classes. The note-taking approach captures instructor and student speech while learning English in class. Teacher and student communication in English classrooms was observed. events, dialogue, and context were examined . The aspects observed in the English language learning process in the classroom are as follows.

- Types of teacher and student politeness speech acts used in the process of learning English in the classroom.
- Politeness strategies used by teachers and students in the process of learning English in the classroom

#### **3.3.2 Interview**

An interview is a meeting when two individuals share information and thoughts via question and response (C. Bird,2016). By interviewing individuals, researchers may better comprehend circumstances and occurrences. Data gathering uses structured interviews since the researcher understands the informant's

information. Interviews were conducted using written questions with alternate replies. The informants' replies should focus on the politeness speech behaviors of instructors and students in English language classrooms.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

I have related the form of language and the content of speech acts to teachers and students in the English language learning process. Extra lingual equivalent method is an analytical method by comparing lingual elements, both those contained in one language or in several different languages. Data contained in the politeness speech acts of teachers and students in the English language learning process in the classroom that have been collected were analyzed based on the types of politeness. The analysis was done using theory and pragmatic studies as well as a combination of theory and pragmatics. The second step is ,data collected in the form of types, strategies, and functions of politeness speech acts in the speech of teachers and students in the English language learning process in the classroom. The data is analyzed by using theory and pragmatic studies and then analyzed by describing the types, strategies and functions of polite speech acts. The last step, namely the conclusion stage, is the last stage carried out. By the researchers, after the analysis is carried out by me so that the results can be known.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Types of Politeness Speech Acts**

4.1.1 Types of Directive Politeness Speech Acts in Learning English in Class. The types of directive speech acts are found in the same place as in English learning mentioned earlier. In other words, she has three speech acts called commands. These speech acts can be explained as follows:

a. The Instructional speech acts when teachers give orders to students. A directive speech act called a command is a speech act that directs an action. The utterances conveyed by the teacher to students in conveying orders are as follows.

[1] Teacher: "Please, pay attention to who reads the results of the group discussion Friend, the rest of the group responded!"

Data [1] is spoken by the teacher when ordering students to pay attention to their friends who read the results of their group discussions in front of the class. The speech delivered by the teacher uses imperative sentences, namely to command students to pay attention to their friends who read the results of group discussions and other groups respond. Speech with imperative sentences sounds more polite, namely by marking the word "please". The word "please" is a polite speech that is conveyed to the interlocutor .

b. Directive Speech Acts of Students to Students in Ordering Speech acts of commanding students to other students are not widely found, because the teacher's dominance is still strong in the learning process. The description of the speech can be seen in the following data presentation.

[2]Teacher: "Before continuing, please finish the conversation for those who haven't finished speaking yet!"

Student : "Shh, don't talk alone! That's Madam, listen!"

Data [2] spoken by students to other students was noisy even though the teacher at that time was explaining the learning material. The student intends to order his friend not to make a fuss because it will interfere with teaching and learning activities. The speech conveyed by the student is classified as polite, because it is carried out in the right context, where it is spoken when he sees his friend who is less respectful or polite to the teacher when the teacher is explaining

the learning material. In addition, the age and status are relatively the same and already familiar a matter which allows students to rule over their friends.

**4.1.1 English Class Expressive Politeness Speech Acts.** The study identified three expressive speech actions in learning English: apologizing, praising, and criticizing. Teachers and students employ three expressive speech actions:

- a. Teacher Expressive Politeness Speech Acts to Students in Giving Apology.
- b. Expressive Politeness Speech Act by Teacher to Students in Praising.
- c. Student Expressive Politeness Speech Acts to Students in Praising.
- d. Teacher Expressive Politeness Speech Acts to Students in Criticizing.
- e. Speech acts of Student Expressive Politeness to Students in Criticizing.

#### **4.1.2 Politeness Speech Acts .**

**4.1.2.1 Directive Politeness Speech Act Strategy.** The English language politeness speech act strategy in the classroom learning process used by teachers and students is in the form of direct and indirect strategies.

a. the most common politeness strategies in directive speech acts are positive politeness strategy which indicates the speaker to be directed to the addressee's positive politeness through the strategies of seeking close relationships and giving appraisal to the listener:

(1) The Strategy for the Speech Act , It is usually said that directives are the speech acts that have in common that they are aimed at provoking an action from the addressee: orders, commands, requests, pleas and so on.

(2) Politeness Act Strategy for Indirect Government Directives.

**4.1.2.2 Expressive Politeness Speech Act Strategy.** Expressive speech acts consist of praising, apologizing, and criticizing. In the following, three direct and indirect expressive speech acts are presented.

**a. Expressive Praising Politeness Speech Act Strategy.**

(1) Expressive Direct Praise.

(2) Expressive Indirect Praise.

**b. Expressive Politeness Speech Acts Strategies Forgiving Teachers and Students Directly.**

**c. Expressive politeness speech act strategy criticizes teachers and students directly and indirectly.**

(1) Expressive Direct Criticism

(2) Expressive Indirect Criticism

## **4.2 DISCUSSION**

### **4.2.1 Types of Politeness Speech Acts in English in Learning.**

The types of politeness speech acts of teachers and students in learning English in the classroom, namely only discussing the two types of speech acts that most often appear (1) directive politeness speech acts in conveying orders, and (2) expressive speech acts in conveying, apologizing, praise, and criticize.

**4.2.1.1 Types of Speech Acts Politeness Directive Speech of Teachers and Students in Government.** The results of the study found directive speech acts in the form of commanding. However, speech that harms other people is considered impolite speech. Therefore, different levels of social status have a speaker's position.

#### **4.2.1.2 Types of Expressive Politeness Speech Acts Teachers to Students in Delivering Praise.**

The results of the study found speech acts of praise. Praise is speech that pleases other people. This speech act of praise is in line with the principle of politeness, namely the maxim of praise. The adage "praising others, criticising others" as little as possible, and praises others as much as possible (Leech, 1993: 206). The speech act of praises between the teacher and the students is a response to students' answers that are considered good. Praise speech acts carried out by the teacher in the classroom aim at showing him/ her as a person who respects his students, And making students feel that their opinions are well appreciated by their teacher so as to encourage other students to express their own opinions.

**4.2.1.3 Types of Expressive Politeness Speech Acts by Teachers to Students in Giving Apology.** The speech act of apologizing is done by the teacher in the classroom to make students aware of their mistakes, that pleases other people.

#### **4.2.1.4 Types of Expressive Politeness Speech Acts of Teachers and Students in Delivering Criticism.**

The study's findings revealed that some pupils' speech acts were critical of their teacher. The interlocutor's face is threatened by criticism. But when people criticise each other, it becomes civilised.

#### **4.2.2 Politeness Speech Acts Strategy in Learning English in Class .**

The politeness speech acts that instructors and students do when studying English in the classroom, which focus on just talking about the two speech act strategies—direct and indirect strategies—that are most frequently employed by both parties.

**4.2.2.1 Politeness Speech Action Strategy Teacher's Directive with Students and Students with Students in Giving orders .**

The direct speech strategy used by the teacher in directing students is polite speech, because of age, status, social distance, and the context of speech in class.

**4.2.2.2 Teachers and Students' Use of Expressive Politeness Speech Action Strategies for Apologizing.**

According to the study's findings, students should apologize to their teachers in speech when they believe they have done anything that has offended them. Thus, the instructor extends forgiveness. The direct technique is what the instructor used to apologize to his students. The method is used in real time in the classroom during the teaching and learning process.

**4.2.2.3 Teacher Expressive Politeness Speech Acts Strategies to Students by instead Praising .** The study's findings revealed speech actions in which teachers compliment students for completing the assignment accurately. The instructor is praising the pupils in this speech act because they are capable of doing well, and they make the teacher pleased. The teacher's applauding speech acts as incentive for other students as well.

## **5. Conclusions and Suggestions**

Based on data analysis of the types, strategies, and functions of polite speech acts of teachers and students in learning English in the classroom, it is concluded that :

1: Speech acts of civility that instructors and students do when studying English in the classroom. In Iraqi schools, instructors and students most frequently employ two categories of speech acts: directive and expressive. Commanding is

one of the directive speech actions; apologizing, praising, and criticising are examples of expressive speech acts.

2: The strategy of polite speech that acts used by teachers and students in learning English in class. the researcher used a direct and an indirect strategy. Expressive speech act strategies of apologizing were found to only use direct strategies, while praise and criticism used both indirect and direct strategies. To improve the weaknesses of the research results, the following are some suggestions:

1) Teachers and students should pay attention to speech acts of language politeness in teaching English in class. With serious attention to speech acts of language politeness, communication between teachers and students, students and students can be more meaningful.

2) The researchers who would like to delve more into the forms and tactics of polite speaking actions in language are invited to pursue this line of inquiry.

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