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FIGHT FOR INDIVIDUALITY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE LANGUAGE POLITENESS STRATEGIES ON FACEBOOK

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Paper Information

Abstract

It is commonly argued that women use polite language as compared to men. Robin Lakoff (1975) argued that women use polite strategies due to their weak position in society, so this study aims to investigate Lakoff's argument in this age of digital media. By employing Brown and Levinson (1987) Politeness theory. The data was collected from the Facebook comments of male and female users. The nature of this study was Descriptive. Data was collected from Facebook user's (Male and Female) comments by using a purposive sampling technique. A mixed-method research design has been employed. For Qualitative analysis, the framework of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) has been applied and Quantitative analysis has been conducted to check the percentages of the use of politeness strategies by males and females. The findings of the study verified the argument of Robin Lakoff (1975), as findings revealed females employed a higher frequency of positive politeness strategies as compared to males. Female become more indulged in saving face to show their involvement and independence in society. The study recommends exploring cross-cultural contexts to verify the use of politeness strategies by males and females.
Keywords: Individuality, Strategies, Discourse, Employed, Politeness.

Introduction

Exploring and comparing the use of politeness strategies between males and females has become a significant area of research in Linguistics. According to Segal (2004), gender is a culture-based value, norm, and behavior that every culture assigns to one biological sex. For example, in some cultures, being male might be associated with traits like strength, assertiveness, and independence, while being female might be associated with nurturing, empathy, and cooperation. These roles are not inherent to biological sex but are created and maintained by cultural practices and beliefs. Lakoff (1973) has identified that women speak politely as compared to men to maintain social status and build relationships in society. This observation opens up a broader discussion on whether such gender differences in language use are inherently tied to biological sex or are, instead, shaped by the specific social and cultural contexts in which individuals interact (Cameron, 2007). According to Lakoff (1973), "There are variances between males and females about the use of English; and these differences in the status of men and women in our society are mirrored in linguistic discrepancies" (Lakoff, 1973, p. 76). Moreover, linguistic manners reveal power dynamics that men tend to show power as compared to women in society. Women's choice of language is governed by their position in the society. According to Lakoff (1975) To get a stronger position in society women are more eager to maintain social status as compared to men. People adapt themselves according to the situations for successful communication. Politeness comes under the category of verbal communication. However, there is a slight difference between linguistic politeness and the general notion of politeness. It is present in the spoken language. The field of linguistic politeness is mainly divided into two areas: positive politeness and negative politeness. The focus is on; which elements of politeness contribute more to spoken language.

Politeness in the speech is directly related to social circumstances and the women's place in the society determines their choice of language. Scollon & Wong Scollon (2001) argues that to maintain social relationships people acknowledge two aspects of a person's face that is 'involvement and independence'. Brown and Levinson define face as *"a public self-image which everyone wants to maintain in the society"* (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.61). The concept of linguistic politeness is based on the idea of face that is acquired from Goffman (1967). Face has been defined as our social and emotional sense of self that we all expect to be recognized in society (Yule, 1996, p.42). All the individuals living in society have an equal right not to be dominated by others and not to be imposed on by others. Politeness is very important during social interaction since people are judged according to how they talk. Lakoff (1973) opines that "women use more figurative adjectives and exaggerated language in their speech as compared to men as they want to secure their position in the society. This exaggerated language is not, basically, 'feminine'; rather, it signals 'uninvolved', or 'out of power'' (Lakoff, 1973, p. 53). (Tahira, Muhammad, Asma, 2023), In the digital world the significance of online platforms has increased manifold and there is a need to be polite to maintain harmonious relations. In digital spaces, where social interactions are often mediated through text, the strategic use of figurative and exaggerated language can be seen as a way for women to assert their presence and navigate power dynamics. As Herring (2004) stated there are multiple patterns of politeness in digital communication as compared to face-to-face interactions. In conclusion, the exploration of gendered language use, with a focus on politeness strategies, underscores the complex interplay between societal norms, cultural practices, and communication. (Shahzaib, Datoo, 2023), By examining how these factors influence the ways men and women express themselves,

both in face-to-face interactions and in the digital realm, this research highlights the broader implications of language as a tool for asserting identity, navigating power dynamics, and maintaining social relationships. Tannen (1990) suggested that the genre of Facebook discourse depicts the existence of Politeness strategies.

Significance of the Study

Lakoff's (1973) argument about women's use of polite speech strategies is a foundational concept in sociolinguistics. Confirming Lakoff's (1973) ideas can contribute to our understanding of gendered language behaviors and their societal implications. This study sheds light on how gender influences language use, particularly in online communication. By focusing on Facebook comments, we can capture real-world interactions without being physically exposed and observe how gender norms manifest in digital discourse.

Research Objective

1.To reinvestigate the argument of Lakoff (1973) about the verbal practices of women to attain a sense of individuality in society by choosing figurative language/adjectives.

2.To redefine the same notion in the modern age of social media by using the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), and the notion of involvement given by Scollon & won-Scollen (2001).

Literature Review

Extensive work has been done on the relationship between gender and language, with particular attention to how politeness strategies vary between men and women. Scholars have explored this dynamic across various cultural and social contexts, providing valuable insights into the ways language reflects and reinforces gendered power structures. Ravi (2014) studied the linguistic behavior of women related to their strength in the societal influences on social media. Similarly, Kousar (2015) explored the use of politeness by Urdu speakers and applied Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The

results provided insights into the cultural and social values of the Urdu speech community of Pakistan. Women's experiences have been examined on social platform Instagram by Sulisyani (2017). Furthermore, Khokhar (2017) examined the politeness of married couples in the context of Pakistan. His research suggested that politeness has been imposed on women only in the marital relationship and men are considered free from this responsibility and consequently couples face various psychological disorders. (Sarwar, Khurram, 2023), In the same way, Khan, F and her co-authors (2022) have investigated the use of politeness strategies in four Pakistani Morning Shows on TV channels, and they analyzed all politeness strategies of Brown & Levinson (1987). Their findings revealed that hosts and guests in morning programs employed all fourteen positive politeness strategies to maintain relationships in online talk.

Theories of Linguistic Politeness

Leech (1983) defined politeness as a treatment that alleviates shifts during conversation. While Ferguson (1986) considered that it is applied during conversation to attain harmony. Similarly, Nolan (1981) has argued that politeness is employed by an interlocutor to attain harmonious communication and Omar (2003) linked it with everyday communication where there is no offense and anger from the speaker and listener. Similarly, Zamzani, et al. (2010) consider politeness as a behavior that is reflected ethically during communication. Many linguists gave their theories of politeness and all of them are connected somewhere with Grice's (1975) cooperative principles. However, Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness is considered the most influential. This part of the study sheds light on some major theoretical approaches to linguistic politeness.

Lakoff's Principles of Politeness (1975)

Lakoff (1975) gave her rules of politeness. She also called them the rules of conversation. She

was inspired by the work of Grice. She recommended two rules of pragmatic competence.

1. Clarity rule that is based on Grice's co-operative principle.
2. Politeness rule.

Lakoff remained focused on the politeness rule that she divided further into three sub-rules (Lakoff, 1975). The first one is: *"Don't impose (Distance)"* It means that a person should keep distance from the other person whom he is talking to. The second one is *"Give option (Deference)"* To maintain politeness, a person cannot use commands to express his desires and at the time of making requests to the other person. The third rule is: *"Make audience feel good"* This rule focuses on friendly and courteous behavior between the speaker and the listener. The speaker should treat the listener as his/her equal partner. Unlike the two previous rules, this rule resembles to politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987)

The theory describes how people produce linguistic politeness (Watts, 2003). Politeness strategies are said to be "*rational deviations*" from Grice's 'Cooperative Principles' (CP). But politeness is an entirely different concept from cooperative principles. Politeness needs to be expressed and communicated by the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.5). People are concerned with their public self-image while they are having social interactions every day. They expect that their face will be respected by others. Brown & Levinson (1987) suggest that as the face is at risk in any conversation, it needs to be checked continually during the talk. It is important to save one's face and the face of others as well (Fraser, 1990). Interlocutors must know how to "*save face*" when they are troubled by a "*face-threatening act*" (Johnstone, 2008). Face is either negative or positive: Negative Face is about a person's desire to be unrestricted by others. (Laghari,

Chachar, et.al. 2023), His need to be independent, to find freedom in action and not to be hindered or imposed by others is represented through negative politeness.

Positive Politeness Strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

Positive politeness strategy is used to show harmony and frankness with others considering the desire of others to be respected and to be appreciated at the same time. The speaker tries to reduce the threat to the listener's face. Brown & Levinson (1987) classified this strategy into fifteen sub-strategies.

Table no. 1. Positive Politeness Strategies

Sr No.	Strategy	Sr. No	Strategy
1	Paying attention to the listener's interests and needs	2	Exaggerating approvals, sympathy, and interests
3	Increasing interest in the listener	4	Using in-group identity markers
5	Asking for Agreement	6	Disagreements should be avoided
7	Presupposition	8	Humor
9	Presupposing the speaker's knowledge and focusing the listener's wants	10	Promises, Offers
11	Being hopeful	12	Involving both speaker and listener in the conversation
13	Asking for reasons	14	Helping each other

Negative Politeness Strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

Negative politeness shows respect and esteem and it also includes an apology for enforcement and interruption (Yule, 1996, p.62). This politeness is about extending the distance. It is used in question form including a modal verb (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.131).

Table no. 2. Negative Politeness Strategies

Sr. no	Strategy	Sr. no	Strategy

1	Being traditionally indirect	2	Hedging or questioning
3	Being depressed	4	Reducing the enforcement
5	Unbiased speaker and listener	6	Giving respect and esteem
7	Making an apology	8	Assuming FTA as a universal rule
9	Nominalize	10	Go on record as experiencing a debt

1. Bald-on Record (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

In this strategy, the speaker talks directly to the listener to express his thoughts. This strategy is employed in uncertain situations where the speaker does not get time to consider the listener and save his/her face. This strategy is used mostly when the speaker and listener are having a close relationship.

2. Off-Record Strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

Here, the speaker employs an indirect way instead of imposing or directly stating something to the listener as compared to the Bald on Record strategy. The speaker avoids face-threatening acts and allows the listener to interpret his utterance in multiple ways to save his face.

Research Methodology

The study has employed a mixed-method research design. Three pictures collectively were placed on the researcher's Facebook account. The first picture was a picture of a healthy cute baby, the second one was a heart-touching natural scene and the third was a picture of a magnificent building. Responses were collected randomly from 20 males and 20 females of various social and educational backgrounds. The social and educational factors were considered constant and only the frequency of figurative comments used by males and females were checked. Data has been analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Politeness theory was used to analyze the data qualitatively. The same theory was used to analyze the exaggerated adjectives/figurative comments present in the speech of male and female respondents.

Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed qualitatively and the following components of politeness strategies have been identified. The positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record, and off-record strategies from the politeness theory have been identified in the collected data.

Table 3. Names of Identified Strategies

Positive Politeness	Negative Politeness	Bald- On Record	Off-Record
Intensify interest to the hearer.	Impersonalize, (giving a general message)	Little or no desire to maintain someone 's face	Be ironic
Notice the hearer's interests wants and needs.	Be pessimistic	Sympathetic Advice/ Warning	Be ambiguous
In group identity markers.	Be indirect		Over-generalize
Give gifts to the hearer.	Be apologetic		Be incomplete (use ellipses)

Positive Politeness

Positive politeness strategies are employed to reduce the social distance between the speaker and the listener by expressing warmth, friendliness, and a genuine interest in the listener's needs or desires. These strategies are often used when the speaker wants to emphasize solidarity, show approval, or create a sense of camaraderie. For instance, compliments shared jokes, or the use of in-group language can make the listener feel valued and included. (Hussain, Rubab et. al., 2023), Positive politeness aims to make the interaction pleasant and to highlight the relationship between the speaker and listener as friendly and cooperative.

1. Intensify Interest to Hearer

By using this sub-strategy, the speaker exaggerates the interest of the hearer in an activity. The strategy shows that the speaker and hearer have a mutual want. The hearer becomes interested in the story and therefore a sweet personality image of the speaker is created.

Table no 4. Intensify Interest to Hearer Strategy

Sr No.	Female's comments
1	"Oh, He is so cool and adorable baby. He looks like you. Isn't he?"
2	"He will be a problem solver Inshallah."
3	"I think you are indulged in your honeymoon memories. Do you?"

Positive politeness is the highest degree of politeness and under this subcategory of politeness three out of three comments are given by the female participants and none has been posted by the male.

1. Notice Hearer's Interests and Needs

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), a speaker notices something good about the hearer and shows appreciation for it. Here are the identified strategies by male and female.

Table no 5. Notice the Hearer's Interests and Needs strategy

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Female	"Scholar like mother"
2	Male	"The beautiful places are for beautiful people like you"
3	Female	"Your son will become a storyteller like her mother"

The above is also a subcategory of positive politeness and the examples depict that one male and two females out of three comments of this category show them highly positive.

2. In Group Identity Marker

Brown & Levinson (1987) stated that such identity markers help maintain solidarity between the interlocutors and claim a common ground to avoid any face-threatening act. Following are the identified strategies that have been employed by males and females in their comments.

Table no 6. In Group Identity Marker Strategy

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Female	"He will be our lil PhD scholar"
2	Female	"Our cute baby"
3	Female	"We will go together"
4	Female	"Let's go together"

5	Female	"This reminds me of the long trip to our university"
6	Female	"Will this be our new home?"

The above examples showed that women are more active in showing solidarity in Facebook comments as six out of six comments of this category are given by female participants.

3. Give Gifts to Hearer

Another politeness strategy that has been employed by participants is "giving gifts to the hearer". According to Brown & Levinson (1987), offering gifts not only gives physical objects but also empathy, cooperation, sympathy, and acknowledgment.

Table no 7. Give Gifts to Hearer strategy

Sr No.	Gender	Female's comments
1	Female	"Cutie Pie"
2	Female	"Sooooo Coooool"
3	Female	"Kisses Comments" (6 times)
4	Female	"Storyteller baby"
5	Female	"A mindful baby"
6	Female	"A learner"
7	Female	" Scholarly baby'
8	Male	"Cute baby" (8 times)
9	Male	"Sweet baby" (8 times)
10	Female	"Sweet baby" (7 times)
11	Male	"Beautiful"
12	Female	"Breathtaking"
13	Female	"Really Blooming Meadow"
14	Female	"Dazzling"
15	Female	"Paradise"
16	Female	"Sooo enchanting place"
17	Female	"Beautiful, lush green"
18	Female	"Panoramic view" "Heavenly View"
19	Female	"It's stunning" "Picturesque"
20	Female	"A striking, awesome view" "A striking, awesome view"

21	Female	"Scenic" "Exquisite"
22	Female	"Splendid view" "Beautiful" (3 times)
23	Female	"Natural beauty" (3 times) "Eye-catching"
24	Female	"Stunning" "Towering"
25	Female	"Wonderful building" "Palatial'
26	Males	"A quaint one" "Artistic design"
27	Males	"Aesthetic" 'Glorious"
28	Male	"Marvelous, stylish Castle" "Amazing Castle (2 times)
29	Female	"Magnificent building" "Beautiful" (6 time)
30	Female	
31	Female	
32	Female	
33	Female	
34	Female	
35	Female	
36	Male	
37	Male	
38	Male	

Negative Politeness

(Batool, Faqir, et. al. 2024), Negative politeness strategies are focused on respecting the listener's autonomy and avoiding any imposition on their freedom of action. This form of politeness acknowledges that the speaker may be infringing on the listener's personal space or time, and thus takes care to minimize this imposition.

1. Impersonalize (Giving a general message)

This strategy avoids targeting directly to the addressor but instead, the speaker speaks like he/she is addressing to third person or giving a general message. Brown & Levinson (1987) argue that this strategy avoids using pronouns like I and you instead, the speaker uses "we" "it seems", and "it would be" and the use of

indefinite pronouns. Look at the examples of the comments that come under this category.

Table no 8. Giving a General Message

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Female	"Cuteness overloaded"
2	Male	"Cuteness overloaded"
3	Male	"Cuteness at its peak"
4	Female	"Sceneries are always beautiful" three times
5	Male	"Such Scenes are always heart-touching"
6	Male	"Nature is always heart-touching"

Four comments of this negative politeness subcategory out of six are given by males and two of the negative comments are given by the female participants.

2. Be Pessimistic

Be pessimistic by doing indirect questions or requests that have a negated probability. Being pessimistic is applied by the speaker when the speaker shows their doubts to the hearer and it is marked by can, could, would, might, will, and may.

Table no 9. Be Pessimistic

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Female	"Don't put his pictures; he may catch the evil eyes"
2	Male	"This may become a hell for you"
3	Male	"You may fall from these mountains"
4	Female	"This may become my tomb, not my home"
5	Female	"Magnificent but lonely"

Three out of five pessimistic comments are given by female participants and only two out of five pessimistic comments are given by male participants. Being pessimistic is also a sub-strategy of negative politeness.

3. Be Indirect

Brown & Levinson (1987) argue that the speaker should avoid invading the hearer's face by avoiding the act involved in a direct utterance. The speaker should speak in a way that avoids a direct request/command so that the hearer does not feel imposed on. So 'be

indirect' is also a sub-strategy to lessen the effect of a face-threatening act.

Table no 10. Be Indirect

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Female	*"He is not like you but more than you"*
2	Male	*"Don't put his pictures to collect likes"*
3	Male	*"This like is not for you but for your baby"*

Two comments on be indirect strategy are given by males and only one is given by a female.

4. Be Apologetic

This is another politeness strategy used by the participants of the present research. The speaker apologizes for invading the hearer's face. Apologizing lessens the effect of the face-threatening act that has been caused by the speaker to the addressee. The speaker reduces face threats to the hearer by being apologetic to show politeness.

Table no 11. Be Apologetic

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Male	*"I am sorry but he is cute than you"*
2	Male	*"I am sorry but it does not match my taste"*

Under this sub-strategy of negative politeness, only two comments are given and both are given by the male participants.

Bald on Record

Bald on-record strategies involve direct, clear, and unambiguous communication, with no effort to soften the impact of the speech on the listener's face. These strategies are often used when there is an urgent need to convey a message, when efficiency is prioritized over-politeness, or when the social context permits such directness due to the closeness of the relationship. For example, in emergencies or among close friends, direct imperatives such as "Do this" or "Give me that" are common. Bald on-record communication is straightforward and to the point, without any of the cushioning that might be found in polite or indirect forms

of speech. Following Bald on Record Strategies have been identified from the analysis:

Little or no Desire to maintain someone's Face

Bald-On Record is the lowest degree of politeness that can be achieved by using several sub-strategies of this category. One of the sub-strategies is 'Little or no desire to maintain someone's face'. The speaker gives rude comments openly and there is no effort to minimize the threats.

Table no 12. Little or no Desire to maintain someone's Face

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Male	*"So boring, lonely place"*
2	Male	*"You may go alone"*
3	Male	*"I don't want to go"*
3	Female	*"Don't show me yar"*
4	Male	*"I will not give comments on such pictures"*
5	Male	*"I don't want to play"*

Most of the comments that belong to this least polite subcategory are given by males only two comments out of eight are related to the Female gender.

Sympathetic Advice/ Warning

Brown & Levinson (1987) stated that another set of cases where non-minimization of face-threatening act is likely occurring and where doing the face-threatening act is primarily in the hearer's interest. Thus in doing the face-threatening act, the speaker expresses that he cares for the hearer's positive facial wants, hence, there is no need for compensation.

Table no 13. Sympathetic Advice/ Warning

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Male	*"You should not see dreams in daylight"*
2	Male	*"Poor people should not see the dreams of such houses"*
3	Male	*"Don't show me otherwise"*
4	Female	*"Please pity on you yar"*

Off-the-Record Indirect

Off-record strategies are employed when the speaker wants to convey a message indirectly, leaving it up to the listener to infer the intended meaning. This approach allows the speaker to avoid making a direct request or

statement, thereby reducing the risk of imposing on the listener or threatening their face. Off-record strategies might involve hints, metaphors, or ambiguous statements that can be interpreted in multiple ways. For instance, saying "It's chilly in here" could be an off-record way of suggesting that the listener should close the window. This strategy is often used when the speaker wants to be polite without overtly stating their desires or needs, giving the listener the option to respond without feeling pressured. Following Off-Record Strategies have been identified in the collected data:

Be Ironic

By giving ironic comments or by using double-meaning sentences, the speaker can minimize the pressure of face threatening act and may become free from the responsibility of the actual meaning of his/ her utterance.

Table no 14. Be Ironic

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Female	*"What a plump, you cute"*
2	Male	*"This may be your in-laws' bungalow"*
3	Male	*"This is yours"*

Two out of three ironic comments are given by male participants.

Be Ambiguous

Brown & Levinson (1987) stated that this strategy is employed by the speaker to minimize face-threatening acts. Only the following three examples have been identified:

Table no 15. Be Ambiguous

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Male	*"A murder house"*
2	Male	*"Put some smoke"*
3	Male	*"Bhoot Bangla"*

Over-generalize

Brown & Levinson (1987) describe that this strategy of over-generalization can make the face-threatening act less intense. The listener might consider it as it applied to his/her not. Similarly, the use of maxims and their associates may become conventionalized to the extent of being on record.

Table no 16. Overgeneralize

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Male	"One should not use the pictures of one's baby to get likes"
2	Male	"Beauty lies in the eyes"
3	Male	"Poor people see dreams in daylight"
4	Female	"Flowers bloom in spring"

1. Be incomplete (use ellipses)

Brown & Levinson (1987) describe that elliptical utterances indicate that a face-threatening act is half done by the speaker. The potential threat that the act could cause is avoided or lessened by using the strategy of leaving the sentence incomplete.
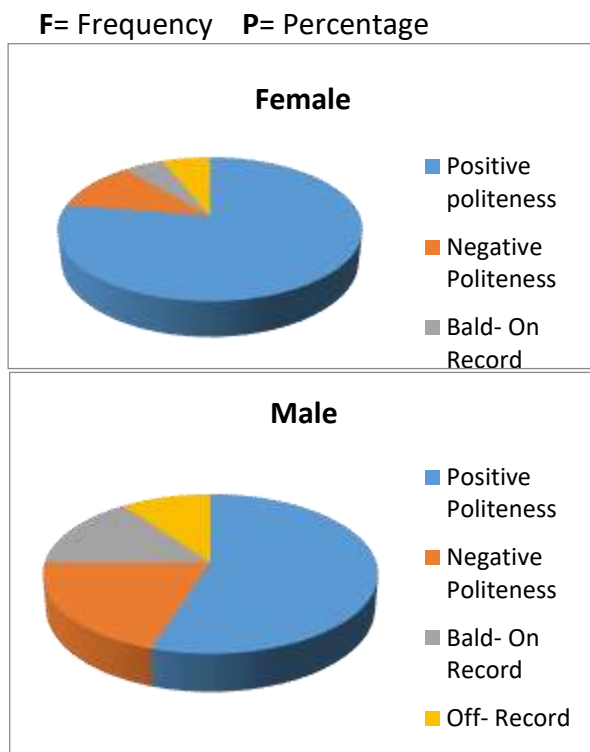
Table no 17. Be Incomplete

Sr No.	Gender	Comments
1	Male	*"He is no doubt a cute baby but………"*
2	Female	*"If you go with your kids then……"*
3	Female	*"Live alone and………."*

Findings and Discussion

For the present research, there were 40 participants in total divided into 20 males and 20 females. Three pictures were shown to them and they commented on these one by one. 40 comments of males and females in total were collected against each picture and collectively the total comments were 120 against the three pictures. From a total of 120 comments, 60 were from males and 60 were from females.

Table no 18. Ratio of Male and Female Use of Politeness Strategies

Positive Politeness		Negative Politeness		Bald-On Record		Off-Record	
F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Male 33 55%		Male 12 20%		Male 09 15%		Male 06 10%	
Female 46 76%		Female 07 11%		Female 03 05%		Female 04 06%	

F= Frequency   **P**= Percentage

Percentage of male and female politeness strategies in the form of pie chart. Findings revealed that the comments regarding positive politeness which is the highest degree of politeness are more in frequency and percentage as compared to Negative Politeness, Bald on Record, and Off Record. However, a prominent difference between the frequency of comments of males and females is noticeable here. The female participants more frequently use the strategy of positive politeness as compared to male participants. Here the findings are similar to the study of Syafrizal (2020) and co-authors as they concluded females use more frequently polite strategies as compared to males. As far as the negative politeness, bald on and off the record strategy is concerned; these less polite strategies are more frequently used by male participants.

Implications and Conclusion

The frequency and percentage of the comments of male and female participants indicate that female participants are politer as far as commenting on Facebook is concerned. The non-polite strategy bald-on record is least used by female participants while commenting

on the pictures while the politest strategy that is positive politeness is also extensively used by female participants. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), positive-politeness utterances are used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy, to imply common ground or sharing of wants. In this regard, Lakoff's (1973) argument about the politeness of females may be stated as true. In the light of present research, it can be said that females use polite language and indulge more seriously in praising and admiring others to strengthen their weak position in society. The sub-strategy 'gifts to hearer' that is used to admire others is extensively used by female participants. This implied that the females in the society use more face-saving acts to show their positive face. According to Lakoff (1973), women are not considered even complete individuals in society so, unintentionally to secure their individuality they become indulged in face-saving acts more as compared to male members of the society. Moreover, the usage of innovative and figurative adjectives by the female participants in their comments is concerned, it is also indicative. In the sub-strategy 'give gifts to hearer' female participants have used so many figurative adjectives as compared to male participants of the research. Brown & Levinson (1987) argue that the only feature that distinguishes positive-politeness redress from normal intimate language behavior is an element of 'exaggeration'. This thing is also supportive of Lakoff's argument that women use more figurative adjectives to secure their weak position in society. Another important feature in the present research, noticed by the researcher is that female participants mostly do not copy the comments of others while male participants copy the comments of each other extensively. This indicates their (women) involvement and independence to show their positive face to society. Scollon & Wong-scollon (2001) argued that the independence part of the face is related to some sense of

individuality and autonomy. In conclusion, the researcher has reached the point that women use more positive politeness strategies to fight for their individuality in society and after so many decades Lakoff's argument seems true even in this modern age of social media. To further validate and strengthen Lakoff's observations, it is crucial to continue exploring this area through more comprehensive studies. Future research could explore the intersection of gender, politeness, and digital communication across various social media platforms beyond Facebook, such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, to see if similar patterns emerge in different online environments. Investigating the role of cultural and regional factors in shaping politeness strategies could also offer valuable insights, particularly in diverse societies where gender norms and expectations vary. Additionally, examining the impact of anonymity on politeness strategies might reveal how the absence of identity influences male and female communication styles. Longitudinal studies could track changes in politeness strategies over time, considering the evolving nature of social media and its influence on gendered communication practices. Finally, a comparative analysis between different age groups and professional backgrounds might uncover whether these politeness strategies are consistent across generations and contexts or if they shift depending on the social and occupational roles of the individuals involved.

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