THE INFLUENCE OF GENDERS ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH FOR ACCOUNTING CLASS CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to report the result of study about how male and female university students behave differently in five main issues of academic context, namely classroom management, turn taking, contribution chance, classroom setting, and students' reaction toward teacher's treatment. Males and females are considered to have a different way of implementing the politeness strategies. Various theories have been discussed in the sociolinguistics domain through the Gender and Politeness Theories. Considering Brown and Levinson's politeness model and Lakoff's idea on gender language tendency, this study does not only view gender and its relationship to the language used, but also describes how gender will be related to the politeness and social attitude matter. Sixty students were selected by using stratified randomized sampling method which considered EPT achievement and gender. The data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed by using descriptive quantitative method. The results imply that there were significant difference on questionnaire perception of politeness strategies between male and female which indicates that female may be more emotionally responsive than male.
Keywords: academic politeness, gender, and politeness

INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, English is required as an important means of communication. People are challenged by the globalization where we should be able to communicate with people from all over the world in order to be able to do the following things, for instance, to exchange ideas, promote matters, offer and bargain, understand people's thought and also experience science and knowledge. It implies that building and improving English language competence would auomatically learning the relationship between language use and situations like knowing how to speak English in various different social context, using specific functions of language, and conveying social meaning or aspects of our identity. Those real-life attitudes and social situations are disccused in the field of sociolinguistics. This is concerned with how language use interacts with, or is affected by, social factors such as gender, ethnicity, age or social class.

According to Lakoff (1975), women and men speak in different ways. They have been taught to speak differently since young: girls should speak in a passive voice and boys should speak actively. In this case, women frequently use women's language such as empty adjectives, intensifiers and qualifiers, tag questions, hedges and polite forms. Jepersen (1922) also found out that women and men had their own languages which they used and understood among themselves. Although in a real life, both sides understood each other's language, they refuse to use it because if they used the language of the opposite sex, it would be viewed as inappropriate. Other things about gender was also stated by Jepersen (1922). Women have smaller vocabularies, show extensive use of certain adjectives and adverbs, more often than men break off without finishing their sentences, because they start talking without having thought out what they are going to say and produce less complex sentences. In a conversation among the same sex, women prefer to discuss private topics. And men tend to speak straightforward while seek for more information, they also use authoritative language (Amir et al., 2012). Several findings above show that male and female are different somewhat in terms of spoken language. Gender is the reason why they do so.

In fact, gender is not the only one factor which influences language use. Other related variable in the study of language and gender is politeness strategies. As stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness is described as showing concern for people's face and two types of politeness (positive politeness and negative politeness) are concerned in their study. Leech (1983) perceives politeness as a pragmatic strategy used by the speaker. His politeness principle consists of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Mao (1994) further proposes two views of face: individual and social, and argues that one view may be more prevalent than the other, depending on the particular society. Mills (2004) goes a step further in arguing that universality in politeness cannot be assumed since class, race, and gender may influence speakers' and listeners' use and interpretation of linguistic

politeness strategies and warned that scholars may be analyzing politeness from a strictly middle class perspective.

METHODOLOGY

The writer used descriptive quantitative method which describes the collection of data for the purpose of describing the exciting condition. By using this method, the writer described the reaction of male and female first year accounting major students in Musi Charitas Catholic University Palembang toward politeness strategies by investigating the politeness and impoliteness behavior occur in the academic classroom activity. There were 25 survey questions on five classroom situations which were described on a Likert scale of 1-4 indicating least polite to most polite behavior. Two variables are involved generally in a study, independent variable and dependent variable.

The population of this study were the first year accounting major students of Musi Charitas Catholic University Palembang in academic year of 2014/2015 with total numbers of 151 students. They were selected by using stratified randomized sampling method. In this case, EPT achievement and gender were considered as variables to select the 60 students as sample of this study:

Table 1. Sample

o.	EPT Achievement	ale	F emale	otal
	Elementary		2	
		3	4	7
	Low Intermediate		5	
				0
	High Intermediate		1	
	Advanced		0	
	Total		3	
		0	0	0

In collecting the data, questionnaire was administered to the students. The items on the questionnaire were categorized in five main issues involve: classroom management (7 items), turn-taking (4 items), contribution chance (4 items), classroom setting (6 items) and students' reaction on teacher's treatment (4 items). Try out was administered to check the validity and reliability of the instrument. It was found out that corrected item-total correlations were higher than r $_{table}$ (> 0.2108). those numbers indicated that all items on the questionnaire were valid. Moreover, the reliability calculation by using Cronbach's Alpha (SPSS) showed that the reliability was 0.857 > R (0.70). It implied that the reliability coefficient of the test was reliable and valid.

The result of questionnaire was analyzed by using descriptive analysis and statistical analysis namely Independent t test by SPSS Program.

FINDING & DISCUSSION

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results showed that the significance (2-tailed) was 0.688 (for the male group) and 0.872 (for the female) which means the data obtained was considered approximately normal.

As described in the methodology, 60 samples were requested to give their response on the questionnaire related to several conditions of politeness in academic classroom context. The questionnaire consists of 25 total statements which are categorized into five different situations. This paper emphasizes on the significant results only.

a. Situation 1 : Classroom Management

In this situation, both male and female students reacted to 7 statements which focus on a student coming late and what happened in the classroom as the result. The result showed that there was significant difference between male and female responses on situation four (0.002) and seven (0.002).

On statement four, samples' response showed significant difference between male and female students with the significance of 0.002. 77% of females considered it was strongly impolite and it was higher than the male did. Females thought that asking the teacher about what they are going to do was not regarded. In this condition, teacher has their own capacity to state to the class on the program which will be executed during the class. This result is also in line with a statement by Kring and Gordon (1998). They claim that female students were affected by their emotional regulation. Since women tend to react

and organize their emotion positively, so they implied that asking about the class program in the beginning of the meeting will literarily limit the teacher's authority and females decided not to offend somebody else emotionally.

Focusing on the teacher's explanation is the last statement of this first situation. The data show that the males and females' response was significantly different. Female students (63%) recognize this statement as more strongly polite than the males (23%) did. As stated in the previous paragraph, male students have problem in dealing with emotional responding. Males think that focusing is not the only way to catch the teacher's explanation. There might be another common technique they could do during the explanation.

b. Situation 2: Turn Taking

This part focused on the turn taking in answering questions in the classroom. Students responded to four types of behaviors.

The results found out significancy on both male and female perception on statement 10 with the significance of 0.001. It is about a situation where the teacher asks students to raise their hand on a discussion setting. Females reacted higher respectively than the males did (67% and 27%). Bacha, et.al (2012) state that the practice of raising hand on a discussion is the right way to deliver opinions, interrupt others and give cues that they would speak. Theoritically, as stated by McRae,Ochsner, Mauss, Gabrieli, and Gross (2008), females have a good and responsive ability. This ability is assumed to strengthen the result of their perception toward this statement.

c. Situation 3: Contribution Chance

In this situation, students reacted to four types of behavior related to the attitude of talking themselves and not paying attention during the lecture. The results showed significant result (0.002) between male and female students' response on statement 12. This behavior illustrates a condition where a few students start talking among themselves. Female considered this as strongly impolite with the percentage of 100.

d. Situation 4: Classroom Setting

Situation four related to how teacher deals with the talkative students. There are six behaviors which were responded by the samples. There was significant difference on male and female's responses on statements 16, 17, 18 and 20.

On statement 16, 43% of the males considered this behavior was impolite while females had different idea on this. In additional, in situation eighteen 43% of males thought that the bahavior was impolite while 53% of females said that it was polite. Respondent focused on giving their perception toward the condition on how teacher deals with talkative students.

On the other hand, statement 19 (asking the talkative students to talk privately) and statement 21 (late arrival is asked to apologize privately) show the insignificant results. Both genders respected the privacy of both late arriver and talkative students. Thus, they have their own view that it would be wise if they do not talk in front of the class. Their responses imply very slight percentage.

e. Situation 5: Student's Reaction on Teacher's Treatment

In this situation, students responded to four behaviors about how students react toward their teacher's treatment. The results show that significant result was found out on statement 22 with the siginificance level of 0.018. It is about a condition where a student tells the teacher to be stricter. Most females (47%) considered this more strongly impolite than males did (27%).

It is also found out that there were insignificant results on statement 23, 24 and 25. Statement 23 is about the situation where the teacher responds the students that students' suggestion on statement 22 is not their business. It can be clearly seen that female reacted on this by categorize this as strongly impolite action (40%). In addition, similar result was also described by students' response on statement 24 about complaining teacher on other's student bad behavior. Lastly, listening students attentively and doing a prompt investigation invite the samples to give better reaction on statement 25. Although it was not significant, both males and females considered this as strongly polite with slight percentage difference.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Based on the findings obtained from both males and females' perception toward the questionnaire,it can be seen that mostly female reacted more responsively than males since studies indicate that women may indeed be more emotionally responsive than men (Bradley et al, 2001).

After conducting this study, some suggestions should be addressed to the practicioners as well as future researchers. These suggestions might be used to gain more beneficial progress in the future studies. As a practicioner, specifically the teacher of English for the second/ foreign language speaker, we need to completely understand that the way our students learn might be partly influence by their first language. This means that there might be an opportunity where they try to speak English by using their first language accent, intonation, as well as behavior which exist in their daily communication. Politeness strategies involve not only the facial expression but also the word choice used during the talks. Furthermore, studies have found out that gender also influences the language learners to react toward politeness strategies. Thus, through this study, it is recommended for the practicioners to accelerate themselves in comprehending those kinds of factors which might influence the language learners to implement the politeness strategies. Future research is also possible to be implemented for deeper and more comprehensive investigation toward the implementation of politeness strategies for foreign language learners. It is advisable to obtain samples' response on qualitative description to strenghten the findings.

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