

POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT TRANSGENDER PERSPECTIVES: A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study explores politeness strategies in conversations about transgender perspectives, using Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework. The research employed a qualitative method, analyzing recorded conversations between male and female participants discussing transgender issues from social and religious perspectives. The analysis identifies four main strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off-record. Positive politeness was the most frequently used strategy, with male speakers employing it 14 times and female speakers 7 times, primarily through agreement, repetition, and joking. Negative politeness strategies appeared 10 times, equally distributed between genders, using indirectness and questions. Bald-on record strategies were used 14 times, mostly by female speakers, indicating their tendency for direct communication. The off-record strategy was minimally used, occurring only once by a male speaker. The study finds that participants' close relationships and shared knowledge facilitated the frequent use of positive politeness and bald-on record strategies. Notably, male speakers were more polite, often using positive politeness, while female speakers were more direct and explicit, especially on sensitive topics. This research highlights the influence of social dynamics and cultural norms on politeness strategies in discussions about transgender issues.

Keywords: *politeness strategies; transgender perspective*

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INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a fundamental tool for communication within communities and societies, playing a crucial role in daily interactions. Effective communication hinges on mutual understanding between speakers and interlocutors; however, discrepancies in perception or disagreement can lead to miscommunication. To navigate these complexities, individuals employ various strategies, among which politeness strategies are prominent. These strategies not only determine the perceived politeness between speakers and interlocutors but also serve to mitigate potentially offensive expressions (Karbelani, 2013). This is in line with Karbelani (2013) stating that politeness strategies are used to fix some

rude utterances, to send speaker's meaning, to make utterances acceptable by the hearers and etc.

The debate of *who speak more politely* among sociolinguists has become interesting since 1970's. In fact, the beginning of this discussion was pioneered in the year 1975 as the key of introducing the field of language and gender (Kendal & Tannen, 2015). One of the first that Kendal and Tannen mentioned related to the preliminary source is the work of Robin Lakoff which is titled *Language and Woman's Place* in 1973. Lakoff's work put attention to the differences of gender in ways of speaking. Departing from what she has written and claimed in her book that women speak politely than men, this topic then became more interesting when several scholars did investigation related to language and gender. There were several studies following what Lakoff had investigated. Kramer (1977) conducted a study and found women speak more politely than men. He proved with several findings conducted to high school students where males have tendency to speak boastfully, dominate the conversation, mostly speak slangs, give forceful speech, etc. In line with Kramer, Haas (1979) conducted a study dealing with the differences among males and females in the way they produce language. Haas's study also appointed stereotypical perspectives from several aspects in reference to linguistic features among males and females. In addition, as a study conducted by Cipriano, Angoluan, and Pantaleon (2020) reported that men dominated women in terms of language use. From those studies conducted, however, there were some scholars argued the findings in association with stereotypical politeness tended to females (Hobbs, 2003; Yeung, 2009). These arguments were grounded according to politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). They went on mentioning that politeness occurs because of the verbal strategies used by the speakers to take the addressee's feeling into account by showing respect for his or her face.

In accordance with who speak more politely, the researchers, in this paper, investigated how politeness strategies vary between male and female speakers during discussions about transgender perspectives, and what factors influence their use.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When people use kind and polite words to express their ideas in conversation, it relates to the field of pragmatics. Horn and Ward (2006) define pragmatics as the study of context-dependent aspects of meaning, which are systematically abstracted from the construction of content or logical form. Additionally, Yule (1996) describes pragmatics as the study of contextual meaning. Canagarajah (2011) further explains that pragmatic competence involves the ability to conceive the timing, topic, and manner of conversation. This competence requires mastery of language that is not only based on building up competence and ability but also on developing a repertoire. This involves constructing knowledge of the various functions of language and building the capabilities to determine when to use the intended repertoire. Furthermore, Meixin (2007) emphasized that the restriction occurred by particular communication contexts is supposed to be governed by cognizant perception and sensitivity to the provision of properness. Therefore, when both the speaker and interlocutor understand to use the contextual meaning in their daily communication or social context, they already implemented the politeness strategy. Watts (2003) pointed out that politeness is not something we are born with but rather it is learned in social context.

Yule (1996, p. 60) stated “politeness is defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person’s face” in daily conversation or in private conversation, people tend to use polite language when they are interacting. In addition, Leech (1938) explained that indirect request is needed when Face Threatening Act (FTA) is more serious. The more indirect request used, the more people tend to be polite. Furthermore, according to Brown and Levinson (1987) theory about politeness strategies. There are four strategies from what they proposed namely; (1) Bald-on record, (2) positive politeness, (3) negative politeness, and (4) off record strategies.

1. Bald-on Record

According to Brown and Levinson, this strategy is used to speak in conformity. It means that this is a strategy used to say direct things. In other

words, the speaker speaks the truth or be sincere. Furthermore, this is meant not to lead the hearer to misunderstanding. The utterances are produced directly, clear, and unambiguous. The purpose of the strategy (p. 95) is stated briefly as follows:

Maxim of Quality: Be non-spurious (speak the truth, be sincere)

Maxim of Quality: (a) Don't say less than is required.

Maxim of Relevance: Be relevant.

Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous; avoid ambiguity and obscurity.

2. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness according to Brown and Levinson (p.70) is used to 'please' the face of the addressee by signifying it in some respects. As its name, it is used to create the positive face of the hearer. Furthermore, the assurance that in general S wants at least some of H's wants minimizes the potential face threat of an act. Moreover, Bae (2019) reported that positive politeness was also used to create a safe communication and avoid the speaker to be anxious. The way of satisfying the hearers' positive face, for example, such as giving compliment, joking, agreement, and assertion (supporting).

3. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness, on the other hand, is aimed to partially satisfy hearer's negative face. Negative politeness, thus, is essentially based on avoidance and realizations of negative-politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker identifies and shows respects to the addressee's negative-face wants and will not disrupt with the addressee's freedom of action. The way speaker redresses the hearers' negative face is asking for permission, question tag, showing respect or deference, indirectness, and apologizing.

4. Off-record

Off record strategy is used through a communication undergone in such a way that it is not possible to link merely one vivid communicative intention to the action. In other words, the actor shares an output by protect himself with a

number of defensible interpretations; it cannot be taken into account that the speaker is able to be interpreted through just one purpose of his or her action. Furthermore, this strategy is fundamentally a sort of indirect use of a language. To use this strategy, one conveys something that is either more common or in fact, different from what is intended. In this case, the hearer is supposed to make some inference to achieve what is actually intended.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach to understand the politeness strategies used by both female and male speakers and the factors influencing their choices. Participants were asked to discuss transgender perspectives, a somewhat taboo topic in Indonesia, as discussing such topics often leads to the use of indirect expressions. According to Leech (1938), the more indirect expressions used, the more people tend to be polite. The study aimed to determine who speaks more politely based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies. Researchers analyzed conversations involving 2 female and 2 male speakers to ensure balanced participation and avoid domination by any group. These four speakers discussed transgender perspectives from religious and social aspects in Indonesia. The discussion lasted 18.41 minutes and took place in one of the participants' homes.

Participants were recruited voluntarily and had diverse backgrounds. Two were working professionals, and two were university students. The first participant was a 24-year-old kindergarten teacher, and the second participant was a 19-year-old university student, both female. The male participants were both 21 years old; one was working, and the other was a university student. They all attended the same church and met almost every Sunday. For data collection and analysis, researchers explained the study's purpose to the participants, obtained their consent to record the conversation, and ensured the confidentiality of their identities. The recorded conversations were then transcribed. Conversation Analysis (CA) was used to categorize the politeness strategies observed during the discussions. All the initials used in this study are pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of the analysis revealed that all strategies of politeness were employed during the conversation. These strategies include positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on, and off-record strategies. The occurrence of these strategies, however, was not evenly distributed. Two prominent strategies emerged from the approaches used by the speakers who participated as interviewees in this study. The detailed description of the occurrence of each strategy is as follows:

1. Positive Politeness

The analysis result shows that positive strategies occurred among the speakers. The frequency of positive politeness occurred between male and female speakers were not equal. From two female speakers, positive politeness strategies occurred for 7 times. On the other hand, male speakers performed 14 times of positive politeness strategies.

Table 1

The Occurrence of Positive Politeness Strategies

Positive Politeness	
Male	14
Female	5

The classification of the strategies in positive politeness from the analysis of the conversation is divided into several categories. There are 3 strategies of positive politeness during the conversation; they are agreement, repetition, and joking. The most occurred strategy in the conversation is agreement. This strategy occurred 14 times; 9 performed by male speakers, and 5 by female speakers. Meanwhile, repetition occurred 4 times; 3 performed by male speakers, and 1 by female speakers. The least occurred strategy is joking, that occurred 3 times; 2

performed by male speakers, and 1 performed by male speakers. The summary of the occurrence is as follows:

Table 2

The Occurrence of Strategies Used in Positive Politeness

Positive Politeness		
Male Speakers	Agreement	9
	Joking	2
	Repetition	3
Female Speakers	Agreement	5
	Joking	1
	Repetition	1

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson noted that the occurrence of positive politeness between speaker and addressee is caused by the similar wants. In this case, they are related to the topic discussed, that is people doing transgender from social and religion perspectives. The analysis of each strategy occurred is as follows:

1.1 Agreement

The results of the occurrence of *agreement* are found by using CA (conversation analysis) toward the transcript of the conversation. The total of the occurrence of *agreement* was 14 times. Male speakers dominated the occurrence of this strategy, that was 9 times. Meanwhile, female speakers performed 5 times in the conversation. *Agreement* was firstly occurred when one of female speakers explained about transgenders in Indonesia that were supported by particular people as described below:

Excerpt 1

CA : “*Tapi kayanya di Indonesia juga kaya Transgender tuh kaya, kaya dimodalin gitu*

karena baru...”

AN : “*ya, sponsor*”

CA : “It seems that people that commit transgender are supported if they are newcomers...”

AN : “Yes, sponsorship.” (**agreement**)

From the transcript, it could be seen that male speaker (AN) agree with female speaker (CA) about the existence of transgender people that are new to society are supported financially. Furthermore, CA also stated an *agreement* in relation to AN affirmation as follows.

Excerpt 2

CA : “*Nah iya pokoknya dia jadi kelihatan berada dan semakin nyaman di lingkungan seperti itu*”

CA : “Yes, they look like wealthy people and become comfortable in such an environment.” (**agreement**)

Agreement, in the conversation, also occurred not only between male and female speaker, but also to both female speakers. It happened when EM stated that people that are doing transgender are creative.

Excerpt 3

EM : “*tapi sebenarnya kalo transgender sekarang gw liat sih kreatif-kreatif ya, banyak yang kreatif kaya...*”

CA : “sukses, sukses”

EM : “In my opinion, people doing transgender are more creative like...”

CA : “Yes, being successful” (**agreement**)

The transcript shows that CA agreed with EM’s opinion related to transgender people that are creative. In addition, CA added that transgender people could also be successful like other people.

Brown and Levinson claimed that positive politeness strategies used, especially *agreement*, not only to redress H’s face, but also for social accelerator. In this case, S and H imply common ground from the topic of the conversation.

Furthermore, the participants of the discussion mostly agreed to each other about the phenomena of transgender around them as follows:

Excerpt 4

JH : *Di endorse ya*

AN : *Iya*

JH : “They are endorsed”

AN : “Yes, they are.”

From this transcript, JH stated that transgender people are endorsed, and AN agreed with him. In this case, AN tried to share the same knowledge of what he knew about transgender people in terms of being supported. In addition, to the participants, the information of the existence of transgender people had been known more by them. Thus, it created an *agreement* as follows:

CA : *Banyak kan orang-orang transgender yang sekarang udah pede memperlihatkan*

dirinya gitu di Indonesia maksudnya udah gak ngumpet-ngumpet lagi

AN : *iya iya ...*

CA : “Transgender people in Indonesia now are more confident to show off, meaning they do

not exist by stealth.”

AN : “Yes.”

1.2 Joking

One of strategies occurred in positive politeness is joking. From the analysis, it was found that there were 3 joking strategies occurred during the conversation. The performance of joking was dominated by male speaker, that is JH. He used this strategy 2 times, while EM as female speaker used this strategy once. In this study, JH did a joke in the conversation. Kind of joking that JH made was not related to aggression, but it showed close relation as friend between JH and EM.

Excerpt 5

EM: *kagak ada apa-apanya dibandingkan si, namanya tuh Denada kalo gak salah, Denada ya, bukan Denada siapa namanya...*

JH: *Penyanyi dangdut ya (joking)*

EM: “There is nothing compared to Denada if I am not mistaken, Denada, right? Denada is not his name ...”

JH: “A Dangdut singer, right? **(joking)**”

In this situation, JH did not intend to aggress the hearer, and the hearer also did not feel that she was insulted. On the other hand, JH felt his closeness to EM so that he made a joke. The joke made was related to the refraction from the name assumption that was wrong to the real name of a Dangdut (one of popular music genres in Indonesia) singer.

Furthermore, joking was also performed by EM to JH at the end of the conversation. She made a joke to JH about whether he was also a transgender. The transcript is as follows:

Excerpt 6

EM : *Jangan-jangan lu transgender...* **(joking)**

EM : “It seems that you are a transgender person...”

This is considered a joke because people doing transgender in Indonesia are considered ridiculous and most people tend to discriminate and mock them. This is a reality that transgender people have to face. Thus, after a joke of ‘suspicious’ to JH, he laughed.

Another joking strategy was shown by JH as the closing marker of the conversation. This is the continuation of EM’s joke to JH as follows:

Excerpt 7

EM : *Jangan-jangan lu transgender...*

JH : “Enggaklah, gua gak transgender ya, gua laki.” **(joking)**

EM : “It seems that you are a transgender person...”

JH : “Of course I’m not, I’m a gentleman.”

This shows that JH replied also with a joke. The joke obviously could be stronger visually when they were showing their satire in relation to gender. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson mentioned that joking is one of saving face of the hearer (p.322). On the other hand, Norrick (1994) associated joking with aggression and rapport.

1.3 Repetition

The last strategy occurred is *repetition*. According to Brown and Levinson (pp. 112-113), repetition is a kind of an agreement that is expressed repeatedly. The repeated form is the part or all of what the preceding speaker has said in a conversation. This is meant to assert that one has heard correctly what was said. Furthermore, it is used to emphasize emotional agreement with the utterance.

Repetition in the conversation occurred 4 times. Male speakers performed 3 times and one of female speakers performed it once. The analysis of repetition from the conversation is as follows:

Excerpt 8

AN : *Sulin sulin ...*

EM : *Iya dari sulinnya gitu*

AN : “Sulin sulin”

EM : “Yes, it’s from sulin”

From the transcript, EM (female speaker) repeated the word *sulin* that was mentioned previously by AN (male speaker) that indicated another form of *agreement*. This repetition emphasized the word *sulin* as the material (according to participants’ knowledge) to get rid of one’s breast (especially a woman) to look like a man.

Besides, repetition also occurred when the participants pertained to religion perspective about transgender people. The analysis from the discussion is as follows:

Excerpt 9

EM : *udah pasti salah lah*
AN : *Pasti salah, pasti salah sih, iya, pasti itu kan jatuhnya ajaran kan kalo agama*

EM : “It’s certainly wrong.”
AN : “Wrong, certainly wrong from religion perspective.”

The transcript shows that EM said the mistake of transgender people from religion perspective. In this case, it is sinful for people that commit a transgender because it changes the nature of human being as a man or a woman and taken into account as a rebellion to God for the gender given to them.

The strategies in the positive politeness strategies occurred more than negative ones because positive politeness strategies, in this case, is likely to occur mostly by the same interests and friendship as Brown and Levinson noted (1987, p. 117). In this case, the occurrences of positive politeness were caused by the same interests of talking transgender people from social and religion perspectives; mostly it occurred in relation to religion perspectives for the all the participants are religious people.

2. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness, according to Brown and Levinson, is used to redress the hearer’s desire that her actions and her attention be unimpeded. In addition, negative politeness is used specifically to minimize particular imposition.

In this conversation, negative politeness occurred for 10 times. Female speakers and male speakers performed equally, that is 5-time occurrence for each. Negative politeness category occurred in the conversation consisted of 2 strategies; they were *indirectness* and *question*. The frequency of the occurrence is as follows:

Table 3

The Occurrence of Strategies Used in Negative Politeness

Negative Politeness		
Male Speakers	Indirectness	3

	question	2
Female Speakers	Indirectness	5
	question	-

From the table, it can be seen that male speakers performed *indirectness* 3 times, and *question* is performed 2 times. Meanwhile, female speakers merely underwent *indirectness*; they did it 5 times. In this case, *question* was not performed.

2.1 Indirectness

Indirectness strategy is used by a speaker to face opposing tensions: the desire to give H an out by being indirect (Brown & Levinson, p.132). Furthermore, the use of phrases and sentences have contextually unambiguous meanings.

The occurrence of indirectness in the conversation dealt with implicit intention in relation to responses to different opinions among the participants. The analysis of indirectness from the conversation are as follows:

Excerpt 10

EM : *Mungkin karena globalisasi juga ya kan, karena di luar itu, di luar itu kan, hal yang seperti itu kan udah biasa gitu kan, gak kaya di Indonesia (indirectness)*

EM : “Maybe because of globalization. Transgender has been common abroad, but not in Indonesia.”

In this excerpt, EM had different opinion of people doing transgender than other participants. She implicitly explained that transgender did not exist in Indonesia, but because of the influence of western culture.

Another indirectness use was from one male speaker, AN. In this case, he also conveyed different point of view in the discussion as follows:

Excerpt 11

EM : *Yang transgender itu jarang ibadah karena dia ngumpul sama sesama orang yang kaya gitu...*

AN : *Tapi kadang kan kita gak ngetahuin juga... (Indirectness)*

EM : “People doing transgender rarely have devotion because they gather with their group”

AN : “But we do not know for sure about it...”

The transcript shows that AN did not agree with EM to what she thought about transgender people that rarely have devotion or went to their religious place. However, AN did not explicitly say that he did not agree, instead, he implicitly argued that transgender people might have other things that caused them did not perform devotion or did not go to their holy place.

Another part of the discussion showed that AN again had different opinion from another participant, CA. To implicitly expressed his disagreement to CA, he used indirectness as shown in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 12

CA : *Salah, harusnya maksudnya kalo misalkan dia udah tiap minggu kegereja ibadah gitu...*

dia kan harusnya ngerti kalo misalkan itu... itu gak boleh...

AN : *Tapi gua mikirnya pasti ada satu hal penting gitu kenapa emang dia tetep nekunin... apa, ibadahnya dia gitu.*

CA : “It’s wrong, if they have regularly gone to church... they should have understood that what they do... it’s not allowed...”

AN : “But I believe there must be an important thing that makes them keep going to their holy place.”

This excerpt shows that when CA said that transgender people should have known that going to the holy place was something wrong and useless for them. Subsequently, AN implicitly said *there must be an important thing* as a weak argument to disagree with. His weak argument was covered with indirectness strategy to save negative face of CA.

2.2 Question

The second strategy of negative politeness occurred was *question*. According to Brown and Levinson (p. 133), *question* is used as another indirectness strategy to one's curiosity. Thus, people can use a question to cater for their curiosity of something. In this conversation, there are 2 question strategies used by the participants, and all were used by male speakers. The uses of question in the conversation are as follows:

Excerpt 13

AN : *Berarti jatuhnya apa?*

AN : "So, what does actually happen?"

From this excerpt, AN posed a question to know what actually happened to transgender people so that they were very convinced in converting their gender. Thus, a question in this case was to cater for AN's curiosity.

In addition, another question was again asked by AN to know about the status of transgender people. This question was still asked to CA as follows:

Excerpt 14

AN : *Jatuhnya dia orang berada?*

AN : "Are they wealthy people?"

This excerpt shows a question from AN about the status of transgender people. He intended to know whether or not all people doing transgender were rich.

The occurrences of negative politeness in the conversation were 10 times, lesser than positive politeness and bald-on record. In this case, two male speakers used indirectness strategies to argue indirectly about what they disagreed with, especially when talking about transgender people from religion perspectives, and question strategies to cater for their curiosity of transgender people in their

society. Meanwhile, female speakers merely used indirectness strategies to explain implicitly about the causes of people that transitioned their gender.

3. Bald-on Record

The analysis of bald-on record in this conversation is according to Brown and Levinson theory about politeness. Brown and Levinson (p.95) stated that the use of bald-on record refers to sincerity, truth, and directness of the speaking. In addition, the use of bald-on record is based on the recognition between S and H. Therefore, there are 14-time occurrence of bald-on record during the conversation. Bald-on record was most frequently used by female speakers. They used this strategy 11 times. Meanwhile, male speakers used 3 times during the discussion. The table is as follows:

Table 4

The Occurrence of Bald-on Record

Bald-on Record	
Male Speakers	3
Female Speakers	11

The use of bald-on record strategy occurred because all the speakers know each other. Therefore, directness was used when they shared their social and religion perspectives toward transgender people with words that are considered abrupt in general. The analysis from the transcript is as follows:

Excerpt 15

AN : ...*Terus pas masa kecilnya, ya dia kena perlakuan gitu kaya apa, sodomi gitu kan, pelecehan sodomi...*

AN : "...In their childhood, they got sodomy..."

In this part, AN mentioned the word *sodomy* which is more vulgar than the words *sexual harassment*. He could possibly say *sexual harassment* instead of *sodomy* to minimize FTA of the H. However, the use of the word *sodomy* was considered

concise, clear, and direct to tell other participants, that were considered as his close people.

Other bald-on record strategies were also used by female speakers. Both female speakers used this strategy to share their point of view concisely and directly, without redressing H's faces, in this case male speakers. The analysis from the transcript is as follows:

Excerpt 16

EM : *Jadi, semakin itulah mereka walaupun sebenarnya sih LL ...*

CA : *Gak ngaku...*

EM : "So they are more existing, even though some of them, like *LL...*"

CA : "He denies his existence as transgender person"

From this excerpt, CA directly said that one transgender doer, known as *LL*, denied his existence from being a woman. Instead of saying that *LL* 'denied', she could say indirectly that '*LL* still admitted he was born as a woman'. Furthermore, EM also used bald-on record to directly share her point of view of transgender in relation to religion.

Excerpt 17

AN : *Oh dari sisi agama ya...*

EM : *Udah pasti salah lah...*

AN : "From religion perspective..."

EM : "It's totally wrong"

This transcript shows that EM directly claimed with high intonation that people doing transgender were totally wrong instead of being indirect by saying *people doing transgender were not in line with religion norms*. The directness could possibly be influenced by seniority of EM who was the oldest.

The occurrence of bald-on record in this conversation was likely to be caused by closeness of all participants. This is in line as Brown and Levinson stated. Furthermore, Meyerhoff (2018) also claimed the same as Brown and

Levinson that people can be generally more polite to people who they do not know very well, and people can be more abrupt with their close friends.

4. Off-record

The occurrence of off-record strategy in this study was only once. It was only uttered by a male speaker, that was AN. The conveyance of off-record strategy was used to pertain a holy place that was assumed as transgender people, especially Christian, to go to worship.

Excerpt 18

AN : *bukan, yang lebih, ibadah-ibadah yang di mall gitu...*

AN : “no, more than that, worshipping in the mall”

From this transcript, AN pertained a worship activity in the mall. In this case, he left a number of defensible interpretations. In other words, he could not be taken into account to commit himself to merely in one particular interpretation of his act. Therefore, this could be defined as some inter denominations of church in relation to Indonesian context that led to unidentified one.

Off-record that occurred in this study was undergone to leave other participants floating definition of a particular attributive place. The speaker did not want to say directly about what he meant, but let other participants define by themselves instead.

DISCUSSION

This study delved into the utilization of politeness strategies within discussions surrounding transgender perspectives, drawing upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) theoretical framework. The findings revealed that all four types of politeness strategies—positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off-record—were observed among the participants, reflecting nuanced approaches shaped by interpersonal dynamics and cultural norms.

Positive Politeness Strategies

Positive politeness emerged as the most frequently utilized strategy, totaling 21 instances. This aligns with previous research indicating that positive politeness strategies, such as agreement and humor, are commonly employed to affirm relationships and mitigate potential threats to social harmony (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The emphasis on shared knowledge and close relationships among the participants in this study echoes findings from studies by Holtgraves (2002) and Bousfield (2008), highlighting how these factors influence the use of positive politeness in interpersonal interactions.

Negative Politeness Strategies

In contrast, negative politeness strategies were less prevalent, totaling 10 instances.. The distribution of indirectness and questioning strategies among male participants in this study resonates with research by Watts (2003), illustrating how gender can influence the adoption of negative politeness tactics in communication dynamics.

Bald-on Record Strategies

The use of bald-on record strategies, particularly by female speakers (11 instances), underscores their preference for direct and explicit communication. This aligns with studies by Mills (2011) and Culpeper (1996), which discuss how individuals, particularly women, may employ bald-on record strategies to assert their viewpoints assertively in discussions on sensitive topics. The minimal use of off-record strategies further supports the notion that participants favored straightforward communication styles over indirect implications, resonating with findings by Spencer-Oatey (2000) on the strategic use of politeness in intercultural interactions.

Gender Dynamics in Politeness Strategies

Gender differences observed in this study align with broader research suggesting that male speakers tend to employ more positive politeness strategies to maintain social harmony, while female speakers may adopt more direct approaches like bald-on record to express their viewpoints assertively (Holmes, 1995; Lakoff, 1975). The findings highlight how gendered communication norms and cultural contexts shape the deployment of politeness strategies in discussions on sensitive topics, such as transgender issues in Indonesian society.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

Findings and discussion revealed that all four types of politeness strategies as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) were employed during the discussion on transgender perspectives. Positive politeness was the most frequently used strategy, occurring 21 times. Male speakers utilized positive politeness strategies 14 times, whereas female speakers used them 7 times. Agreement was the dominant category within positive politeness, with male speakers employing it more frequently than their female counterparts. This prevalence of positive politeness can be attributed to the shared knowledge and close relationships among the participants, promoting agreement and joking as markers of closeness.

In examining politeness strategies in discussions on transgender perspectives, this study identified a range of strategies influenced by participant dynamics and topic specificity. Positive politeness emerged as the most prevalent strategy, particularly among male speakers, reflecting their use of agreement and humor to enhance rapport. Female speakers, on the other hand, favored bald-on record strategies, characterized by directness and clarity in their communication. This pattern suggests that the closeness of relationships and shared knowledge among participants facilitated varying degrees of politeness expression.

The findings also underscored cultural norms and participant familiarity as crucial factors shaping politeness strategies. Male speakers tended to maintain

politeness through positive politeness strategies, whereas female speakers were more direct and explicit, especially in addressing sensitive topics. Despite the taboo nature of transgender issues in Indonesian social and religious contexts, participants demonstrated nuanced approaches in their communication, balancing politeness with directness.

Implication

The study's insights offer significant implications for understanding how politeness strategies contribute to effective communication in diverse cultural contexts. In educational settings, educators can foster inclusive dialogue by recognizing variations in politeness strategies across gender and cultural backgrounds, thereby creating a supportive environment for discussing sensitive topics. In terms of cultural sensitivity, it plays a crucial role in enhancing communication competence in multicultural settings, enabling participants to navigate discussions respectfully and effectively. This study hopes to contribute valuable insights into the complex integration of politeness strategies in shaping discourse on sensitive topics, providing a nuanced perspective on how interpersonal relationships, cultural norms, and gender dynamics influence communicative behaviors.

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