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Unveiling Politeness Strategies in Students-Teachers
Email Interactions
Case of second year Master EFL Students at Ibn
Khaldoun University of Tiaret

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters in Linguistics

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Dedication

First, I am extremely grateful to Allah, who helped me to finish this modest work.

This dissertation is devoted to:

My loving mother and father, who have given me strength and support, I wish them a
long life.

All my family members.

Fatima KHALLOUFI

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother, whose love, support, and encouragement
have been the foundation of my success. Though you are no longer with us, your
memory continues to inspire and guide me. To my dear father may God protect him
To my brothers and sisters and all my family.

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Abstract

This paper examines the various politeness strategies employed by students when emailing their teachers, as well as teachers' perceptions of the use of these strategies. This study also aims to shed light on the effect of cultural background on politeness. The study employs a qualitative approach, using content analysis and a semi-structured interview. The content analysis focuses on 17 emails from Master two students at the English department of Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret, Algeria, where the study was conducted, and includes interviews with six teachers from the same department. Findings indicate that students use the four politeness strategies in a random manner without regard to cultural influences. While teachers perceive negative politeness as most appropriate.

Keywords: cultural influences, email, politeness strategies, teachers-students interactions.

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List of abbreviations and Acronyms

FTAs: Face Threatening Acts.

FSAs: Face Saving Acts.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

M2: Master two.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Effective communication between teachers and students is important. Email is a primary mode of interaction between students and teachers. However, students' lack of awareness of politeness strategies can lead to misunderstandings in email interactions. This means that politeness' awareness is important in student-teacher interactions.

Therefore, this research, employing Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework of politeness strategies, aims to investigate what students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret Utilise politeness strategies specifically in emails sent to their teachers. By analysing a collection of Master Two EFL students' emails, the study will offer valuable insights into communication patterns and their potential impact on the teaching-learning process;it focuses on identifying the types of politeness strategies students utilise in their emails to teachers byanalysing email content to see if students primarily use positive politeness (exaggerated interest, in-group markers), negative politeness (apologies, hedges), bald-on-record (direct requests), or off-record (indirect suggestions) strategies and how effectively students use these strategies. Further, the study sheds light on how teachers perceive student emails and the importance they place on politeness strategies and if there are any cultural influences on their perceptions. This may contribute to designing communication guidelines or workshops for students on appropriate email etiquette.To accomplish these goals, these questions have been raised:

1. What politeness strategies do students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret employ in their email interactions to teachers?
2. How do teachers' perceive the politeness strategies used by students in emails?

To answer these questions, we hypothesise that:

1. Students employ various politeness strategies to address their teachers on Email.
 2. Teachers' perceptions of emails may be influenced by the choice of these strategies.
- The present dissertation adopts the qualitative design in order to gather in-depth information about the theme under investigation. On this basis, a text corpus analysis is adopted to examine the students' emails and to investigate the nature of politeness

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strategies used. Also, a semi structured interview for teachers to know how they perceive these strategies.

This dissertation is divided into theoretical and practical parts that comprise three chapters; the first chapter covers an inclusive overview about politeness theories and strategies. The second chapter deals with the role of politeness in online interactions. In addition it sheds light on students' awareness of politeness strategies and provides previous studies on politeness strategies in online interactions. While the third chapter deals with the methodology used in data collection and discusses the reported data and findings, it also stresses limitations of the study and further research suggestions.

**CHAPTER ONE:
THEORETICAL
BACKGROUND**

1.1. Introduction

The contemporary chapter provides a theoretical framework concerning the concept of Politeness. First, it highlights the definition in the field of linguistics and its relation to face. Then, it covers politeness theories focusing on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and its strategies and factors influencing these strategies. Finally, it represents the role of politeness in maintaining positive relationships and politeness across cultures.

1.2. Definition of Politeness

According to leech (2014) politeness is a universal phenomenon of human society, it is a form of communicative behaviour found generally in human languages and among human cultures. The English word "polite" which means "polished", made smooth (Oxford dictionary of English, 2000). This term was adopted by the English language and became a part of its lexis.

The concept of politeness has been a subject of interest across various fields including Linguistics. It means to take the hearer's feelings and desires into consideration when speaking and acting, this means that politeness could be expressed verbally and nonverbally in actions (Leech, 1983). It is defined by Cambridge dictionary as a behaviour that is socially correct and shows understanding and care about others feelings. However, when talking about linguistic politeness, the pragmatic term is meant and not politeness referring to social rules of behaviours such as letting people go first through a door. (Cutting, 2002), we talk about what is communicated within a linguistic interaction or a social interaction. Because, our social relationships mostly determine what we say.

Politeness has been analysed widely in connection with face by many scholars who defined it as maintaining the hearer's face process. According to Yule, politeness is defined as showing awareness with another person's face. It has been defined by different linguists, but their definitions show that they all agree that the face is the most relevant concept in the study of linguistic politeness.

Lakoff (1975) a well-known figure in the field, represents politeness as those types of behaviour that have evolved in societies, to minimise tension in personal interactions. Whereas, Fraser and Nolen (1981) finds that politeness is the product of participants

agreeing to a conversational contract to preserve socio-communicative verbal contact, free of dispute. Similarly, Leech (1983) finds that politeness is described as behaviour styles aimed at the establishment and maintenance of comity.

Politeness is not an innate or natural phenomenon, but it is something that individuals can only achieve through the process of socialisation. Watts(2000).In this concept, a polite linguistic behaviour is not innate but it is something that has arisen due to social, cultural and historical factors (Marquez Reiter. 2000).

Based on the previously mentioned definitions, politeness can be defined as a set of social skills whose goal is to ensure that everyone feels relaxed in interactions. The fact that politeness is a complex concept makes it difficult to find an absolute and unique definition of the term.

1.3. Face and Politeness

The concept of face is the central idea of politeness theory, it is " The public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson 1987.66). Each person in interaction is established as what is mentioned as a face. The face is representative of the self-picture in the community characteristics by using other terms; the face has a meaning of self-respect and self-regard.

According to Goffman (1955) face is something that can be lost, maintained or enhanced during a face-to-face or a mediated contact with another participant, it is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Politeness is undoubtedly connected to the notion of face and face work, its role is to demonstrate regard and respect for the recipient or to save his or her face. According to Brown and Levinson's assumption in politeness theory based on Goffman's face, one's face is categorised into two forms; positive and negative.

1.3.1. Positive and Negative Face

Brown and Levinson defined positive face as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others executors" Furthermore, as it is "the positive consistent self-image or personality claimed by interactants" (Brown and Levinson 1987.p, 61). Means that it is the need for self-image to be accepted, appreciated and approved of by others, to be as a member of the same group and to know that his

wants are shared by others. It is the need for personal space and respect for one's personal choices and actions. Respecting a negative face means minimising the imposition on the others, thus allowing them to maintain their autonomy and personal space.

On the other hand, a negative face is defined as “the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others” (Brown and Levinson 1987:61). It is the need to be independent and to have freedom of action and not to be impeded on by others. Respecting a positive face means enhancing the other person's self-esteem and showing that their values, desires, and opinions are valued and shared.

Acts that threaten this negative and positive face, known as face-threatening acts (FTAs), inherently damage the face of either the addressee or the speaker by opposing their wants and desires.

1.3.2. Face Threatening Acts

Brown and Levinson (1987) note that the meaning of face threatening acts (FTAs) are “those acts that by nature are contrary to the face wants of the addressee or of the speaker” (p.65). A face threatening act is an act that inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other, most of these acts are verbal. However, they can also be conveyed in the characteristics of speech (such as tone, inflection, etc.) or in non-verbal forms of communication.

1.3.2.1. Negative Face Threatening Acts

Negative face is threatened when an individual does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their interlocutor's freedom of action. It can cause damage to either the speaker or the hearer, and makes one of the interlocutors submit their will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are impeded when a negative face is threatened.

1.3.2.2. Positive Face Threatening Acts

Positive face is threatened when the speaker or the hearer does not care about their interlocutor's feelings, or does not want what the other wants. When an individual is forced to be separated from others so that their will being is treated less importantly, positive face is threatened.

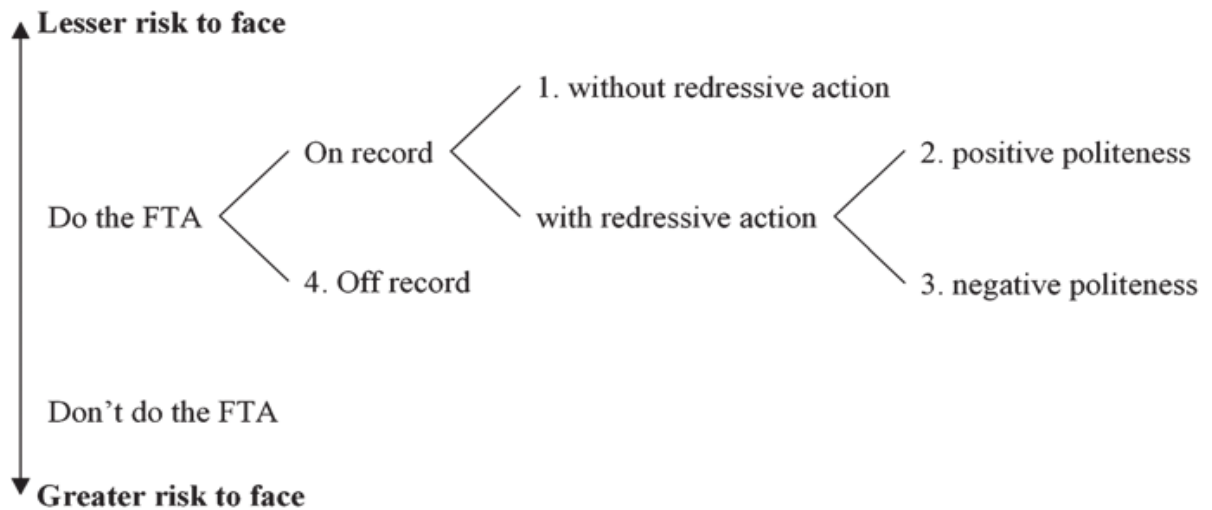


Figure 1. Possible Strategies for Doing FTAs (Adapted from: Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69)

1.4. Politeness Theories

1.4.1. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is certainly the most influential since it has witnessed innumerable reactions, applications, critiques, modifications and revision. It appeared in 1987 and it is divided into two parts; the first one explains their basic idea about the essence of "politeness" and how it works in interactions. The second part contains a list of "politeness techniques" with examples in three languages: English, Tzeltal, and Tamil.

Brown and Levinson introduce the concept of "face" in the theoretical section of their work to explain politeness in a broad context. That is to say all interactors are interested in preserving two different forms of face during interaction; positive and negative face. They described a positive face as the optimistic and consistent picture people have of themselves, as well as their desire for acceptance. Negative face, on the other hand, is described as the fundamental claim to territories, personal preserves, and non-distraction rights".

Politeness is divided into two types; positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness is demonstrated by satisfying the positive face in one of two ways: by showing interlocutor similarities or by demonstrating respect for the interlocutor's self-image. Negative politeness can also be demonstrated in two ways: by preserving the interlocutor's face (either negative or positive) by avoiding face-threatening

actions, such as advice-giving and rejection, or by satisfying addressee's right not to be imposed on. In short, politeness is shown not only to reduce FTAs but also to meet the needs of the interactants regardless of whether or not an FTA occurs.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) there are four politeness strategies that are used to minimise or avoid the face-threatening acts that are capable of damaging other people's face. Politeness is the study of the manners people employ during interaction or communication. It teaches how to utilise the language and make a conversation flow smoothly. The speaker may select one of the four strategies that are discussed briefly from most to least threatening.

1.4.1.1. Politeness Strategies

1.4.1.1.1 Bald on Record Strategy

This strategy does nothing to reduce the threat to the hearer's face. The speaker in this case is direct in his speech. It is used in urgency, welcoming, offering situations. This strategy confirms Grice's maxims which are maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relevance. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), Bald on record is considered as the most direct and the least polite. There are different cases that lead to the use of this strategy which are:

- **Cases of the Face Threat Non-Minimisation**

The bald on record is adopted in the situation when efficiency is important and it should be maximised. Both the speaker and I agree on the maximisation of efficiency. With this respect, politeness is decreased in urgent cases in which a quick action is needed as illustrated in the following example :"(1) Help! In a non-urgent case, he would say: please help me, if you would be so kind. (2) Watch out! (3) Your pants are on fire! (4) Don't burn your hand!" (p.95).

- **Cases of FTA-Oriented Bald-on Record Usage**

Another case of bald on record usage is notably oriented to the face in which respect for face requires mutual orientation. In this regard, the speaker minimises FTAs by giving hints as softening the hearer's anxiety with the use of pre-emptive invitation. Accordingly, this case shows politeness in its broad sense. For instance, the speaker may say "Come in, don't hesitate, I'm not busy"(p.98-99).

1.4.1.1.2. Positive Politeness Strategy

This strategy is used as a way to make close relationships with the hearer. Lakoff (1973) argued that the relationship involved here is similar to the relationship between friends. So, the speaker cares about the hearer as he cares about himself. The positive politeness is selected when the interlocutors have a close relationship. The receiver is considered a member in the group whose personality is liked and appreciated.

Brown & Levinson (1987) indexed fifteen sub-strategies of positive politeness (p.102). These are:

Notice: Attend to Hearer

It indicates that there are noticeable changes in the hearer's physical appearance or personality that he would like the speaker to notice, to approve, and to acknowledge them. Example: "What a beautiful vase this is. Where did it come from?"(p .103).

B. Exaggerate

This sub-strategy implies that the speaker uses exaggerated intonation and tone to show his interest, approval, and sympathy towards the speaker. Example: "What a fantastic garden you have". (p.106)

C. Intensify Interests to Hearer

The speaker intensifies the listener's interest and draws him into the conversation. As in tag questions, the speaker employs expressions in which the listener participates in the conversation. Example: "I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see?" (p.103).

D. Use in-group Identity Markers

This strategy focuses on the use of address forms, in-group language or dialect, Jargon, or slang. Example: "dear, cutie, sweetheart, honey, Blondie, luv"(p.107).

E. Seek Agreement

In this strategy, the speaker emphasises agreement with the listener by choosing safe subjects to fulfil the listener's desire to be right or to share his perspective and repeating part from the previous speaker's speech.

Example:

“A: John went to London this weekend!”

“B: To London!”

F. Avoid Disagreement

This sub strategy is frequently applied to make the speaker capable of hiding his disagreement. In order to avoid disagreement, the speaker may adhere to the following:

- Token agreement: The interlocutor pretends to agree with the listener to hide his disagreement by means of twisting his utterance. For example: “A: What is she, small? B: Yes, yes, she is small, smallish, um, not really small but certainly not very big” (p.112).
- White lies: When the speaker uses a white lie to show agreement about something. For instance: "Yes, I do like your new hat!"(p.113-114).
- Hedging opinions: As using the following phrases: "sort of, kind of"(p.116).

G. Presuppose/Raise/Assert Common Ground

This strategy includes talking for a long time about unrelated things, such as asking for gossip or small talk.

Example:" Well I was watching High Life last night and ..."(p.117).

H. Joke

Jokes are used to stress the shared background knowledge or the shared values between the speakers and the hearer and to put the hearer at ease.

Example:": "OK if I tackle those cookies now? (p. 125).

L. Assert or presuppose the speaker's knowledge and concern for the hearer's wants

This sub strategy implies displaying cooperation between both the speaker and hearer by presupposing that the speaker's knowledge has a connection with the hearer's desire. Thus, conceivably the hearer is pushed to cooperate with the speaker. For instance, "I know you love roses but the florist didn't have any more, so I brought you geraniums instead" (p .125).

J. Offer and Promise

The speaker can employ this strategy by making offers and promises to the listener to preserve a positive face.

Example: "I'll drop by sometime next week"(p.125).

K. Be optimistic

This strategy relates to the desire to demonstrate that the speaker and the hearer are both participating in the action.

Example: "Look, I'm sure you won't mind if I borrow your typewriter"(p.126).

L. Inclusion of speaker and hearer in the activity

Using (we) and (let's) instead of (you) and (me) are examples of this strategy, in which the speaker includes himself in the conversation and can shorten the distance.

Example: "let's stop a bite." (p.127)

K. Give Reasons

This strategy refers to the reflexivity of the listener. The speaker explains why he wants what he wants and involves the hearer in his reasoning and postulating reflexivity.

Example: "Why don't I help you with that suitcase?" (p.128).

L. Assume or Assert Reciprocity

By agreeing on what the speaker and hearer should do to demonstrate collaboration.

Example: "I'll do X for you, do Y for me"(p.129).

M. Give gifts to Hearer (Goods, Sympathy, Understanding, and Cooperation)

The speaker may show that his wants and those of the hearer are the same to some degree. As a part of positive politeness behavior, the speaker may give gifts to the hearer that can be material or moral ones. "The kind of gifts that should be considered are those related to human feelings particularly to make the hearer feels that he is appreciated, interested in, admired, cared about, and listened to"(Brown & Levinson. 1987, p.125).

1.4.1.1.3. Negative Politeness

This strategy is a non-imposing one. In this case, there is a social distance between them, so they speak formally with each other. For example someone might be requested to pass the salt as follows: Could you please pass the salt? By using "Could

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you please" the speaker is minimising the imposition on the hearer and as a result he redresses the hearer's negative face. In the following Brown and Levinson (1987) provided an account about negative politeness strategies (p.131), which are:

- **Be Conventionally Indirect**

In this regard, the speaker will transmit his message indirectly apart from imposition on the hearer's face. For instance, he may say "You couldn't possibly pass the salt (please), (could you)?"(p.145)

- **Question and Hedge**

Employing a hedge or asking indirect questions with which they achieve less direct utterances. Hedge is a word or phrase that, in most situations, alters the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase by making it partial, making a statement less powerful or assertive. Example: Bill is a real fish "(p.145).

- **Be pessimistic**

Through explicitly expressing doubt, the speaker is able to give redress to the hearer's negative face. For instance, I don't suppose there'd be any hope of you..."(Brown & Levinson, 1987,p.173-174).

- **Minimise the Imposition**

The speaker requests assistance without making an imposition statement, allowing the listener to decide whether or not to pay attention and do what the speaker requests. Example:" I just want to ask you if I Can borrow a tiny bit paper "(p.177).

- **Give deference**

First, the speaker debases or humbles himself. Second, the speaker considers the listener to be superior. The hearer is conveyed as having a higher social rank than the speaker in both circumstances. As a result, the speaker can use phrases like sir, president, officer, or other expressions that are very context-dependent (p.178).

- **Apologise**

In this sub-strategy the speaker apologises and promises her regret or unwillingness to conduct a FTA on the negative face. Example: "I'm sorry to bother you ..."(p.189).

●
● **Impersonalising Speaker and Hearer**

The speaker averts to the use of you and I confirm that he does not want to impose on the receiver. For instance: Why late? Instead of saying why you are late? (p.194).

1.4.1.1.4 .Off Record

This strategy is more indirect and polite compared to the previous ones according to Brown and Levinson .It is used to allow the speaker to express a communicative goal that is uncertain. It implies that speakers can use this strategy and let the addressees understand the intended message if they want to avoid having to execute FTAs. Off record strategy include.

● **Give Hints**

The speaker gives a hint using an indirect way to motivate the listener to look for the appropriate interpretation. Example: "It's cold in here", the speaker give a hint to say shut the window. (215)

● **Give Association Clues**

Speakers may suggest something linked with the intended performance of the listener by means of clues related to interlocutor's previous experiences or interactional mutual knowledge. Example: "This soup is a bit bland "the speaker gives a hint to say pass the salt (p.216).

● **Presuppose**

The addressor says a sentence that motivates the listener to search for a presupposed previous incident by implicating something. Example:" I washed the car again today" the speaker presupposes he has already washed the car. The word again urges the hearer to look for a prior event (p.217).

● **Understate**

The speaker says less than it is required for example, the speaker says " it is not half bad", he thinks that it is surprisingly good (p.218).

● **Overstate**

The speaker says more than what is required .For instance, the expression "there

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were a million people in the Co-op tonight!" conveys an excuse for being late (219).

● **Use Tautologies**

It is another way that breaks the quantity maxim demonstrated by the speaker in a non-informative utterance and forces the listener to represent an interpretation. Example "war is war"(p.220).

● **Use contradiction**

The speaker may seem as not saying the truth and the hearer seeks to find the appropriate interpretation. As in the example (A): are you upset about that? (B): I'm and I'm not"(p.221)

● **Be Ironic**

Ironic expressions with opposing meanings may be used by the speaker to indicate contradictory meanings that are considered indirect. Example: he may ironically say "John is a real genius "while John has just done twenty stupid things in a row (p.222).

● **Use Metaphor**

Metaphor can be used in speech to convey a false literal meaning. In the example "Harry is a real fish", the metaphor can have different interpretations and it may denote that Harry swims as a fish

● **Use Rhetorical Question**

The speaker asks questions not to get an answer but to signal specific information. For example: "What can I say? Implies that the speaker is not looking for a real answer and he means I can say nothing (223).

● **Be Ambiguous**

Ambiguity is achieved by the use of metaphor .For example "John's pretty smooth cookie"(p.225)shows that the speaker gives ambiguous meaning, it can be compliment or insult for John's cookies.

● **Be Vague**

This sub-strategy is about an unclear statement that conveys a mysterious meaning.

Being vague has to do with the object of FTA or about what the offence is. For example: "Perhaps someone did something naughty" (p.225) present that the speaker did not specify the naughty act by using "did something".

- **Overgeneralize**

The speaker tells a general rule, and the listener decides whether this rule is applied to him or not. As illustrated in the sentence "mature people sometimes help do the dishes" (p.226). The speaker generalises this rule and the hearer decides if this general rule applies to him or not.

- **Displace Hearer**

The speaker addresses the FTA to a person who would not be threatened, hoping that the target hearer will understand that the speech is intended for him. Example: "Someone has to be responsible for this mess." (p.226).

- **Be Incomplete and Use Ellipsis**

Elliptical utterances may be utilised to reduce the FTA because incomplete sentences exhibit that the speaker is not referring to a precise issue. For instance "Well, I didn't see you ..." (p.227).

1.4.1.1.5. Do not do the FTA

It is the fifth politeness strategy that is claimed to be more polite. It is adopted when a speaker fails to fulfil his desired communication goals. Yet, little literature is reviewed about this strategy. Brown and Levinson (1987) drew attention to distinctive categories of politeness, and they often described that the speaker may avoid offending the hearer with this particular FTA. Otherwise, there are no interesting linguistic views of this last strategy, which is ignored in Brown and Levinson's discussion (p.72).

1.4.1.2. Factors Influencing the Use of Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson highlighted three factors that affect the choice of politeness strategy and the seriousness of the face threatening action. These factors are: Power, Social distance and Degree of imposition.

A) Power

It refers to the power relationship between two interlocutors, in this case if speaker A is

more powerful than B, then A should use less politeness strategies than B to perform a specific face threatening act.

B) Social Distance

If two people are very close, they would have a low degree of social distance. However, two strangers would typically have a high degree of social distance. Higher degrees of social distance result in the use of more formal language, meaning that the speaker and the hearer should be politer in the strategies used if they are socially distant.

C) Degree of Imposition

Refers to the importance or degree of difficulty in the situation. For example, in requests, a large rank of imposition would occur if you were asking for a big favor. Whereas, a small rank of imposition would exist when the request is small. High ranks of imposition tend to require more formal and complex language structures.

Finally, Brown and Levinson theory has received a lot of criticism, especially on the grounds of it not being universally applicable across cultures. The criticism has been pointed at their politeness theory's "universals" affirmation which is presented in their subtitle (Some Universals in Language Usage). It has been addressed that Brown and Levinson's model has a western alignment, so that it cannot be a universal theory applicable to all languages and cultures.

1.4.2. Geoffrey Leech's Theory of Politeness

Geoffrey Leech (1983) has introduced a model similar to Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) in which he defines politeness as a set of behaviours between participants that show feelings of comity. So, politeness for Leech "is about strategic conflict avoidance and showing regard for others" (Zerkourafi, 2015, p957). In other words, this model cares about the other rather than the self.

Leech in his theory classifies the politeness principle as a series of maxims to explain how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. According to him the politeness principle is divided into six maxims. He mentioned five scales for each maxim that show the degree of politeness:

A) The Cost-benefit Scale

In this scale, the cost and the benefit refer to the addressee. So, if the benefit is

higher to the addressee than the cost, then it seems to be politer. On the contrary, if the cost is higher to the addressee than the benefit, than it seems to be less polite.

B) The Optionality Scale

Giving options is usually there in indirect utterances used by speaker when requesting or giving a command. So, whenever the speaker gives an option to the addressee to choose, that will show more politeness.

C) Indirectness Scale

This is similar to Brown and Levinson's off-record strategy. Being indirect means an increase in the degree of politeness. We assume that the more indirect the utterance will be, the politer it will be. For example when asking to close the door by using "close the door" it is considered to be impolite. While if saying "will you close the door please?" it is in a polite way.

D) Authority Scale

The scale represents the social status among people. The utterances we use while interacting with people show whether the addressee is a superior, a subordinate or the same. A person with high social status would have more authority than a person with low social status.

E) Social Distance Scale

This scale shows the degree of familiarity among people, close friends will be less polite in their utterances and show high solidarity with each other in comparison with people with distant relationships.

1.4.2.1. Leech's Maxims

1) Tact Maxim

It is the most important since it requires the speakers to minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other. It is used in directives and commissives.

2) Generosity Maxim

It requires the speaker to minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self. It is used in directives and commissives like the tact maxim, but it is self-centered.

3) Approbation Maxim

It requires the speaker to minimize dispraise to self and maximize praise to other. It is used in expressive and assertive utterances.

4) Modesty Maxim

This maxim requires the speaker to minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self. It is also expressed by expressive and assertive uttrances.

5) Agreement Maxim

It requires the speaker to minimize disagreement between self and other, and maximize agreement between self and other. The hearer should show agreement with the speaker, if he shows disagreement, his speech would be impolite.

6) Sympathy Maxim

It requires the speaker to minimize antipathy between self and other, and maximize sympathy between self and other. For example, if one lost somebody and the hearer felt sorry for that, in this case he is showing sympathy to the speaker.

1.4.3. Grice's Cooperative Principle

Every interlocutor in every interaction must follow a certain manner of interaction in order to communicate effectively. As a result Herbet Paul Grice created the cooperative principle. Grice beleived that meaningful dialogue was characterized by cooperation and based his cooperative principle theory on the assumption that participants in a conversation usually attempt to be truthful, informative, relevant, and clear in order to facilitate successful communication. Based on these assumptions, Grice divided his Cooperative Principle into four Conversational Maxims. He beleive that any one wishing to engage in meaningful communication would follow these maxims and would assume that others would also be following them.

1) Maxim of Quality

- Only say things you beleive to be true.
- Do not say things that you cannot back up with evidence.

2) Maxim of Quantity

- Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as is required.
- Do not contribute more informative than is required.

3) Maxim of Relevance

-
- Only say things that are relevant to the conversation.

4) Maxim of Manner

- Be clear.
- Be concise and coherent.
- Be orderly.
- Avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

Grice's conversational maxims have been criticized as they fail to recognize that cooperation within conversations is culturally determined, as with most social interactions. Grice's maxims are based upon expected behaviours within the western world. Therefore, they cannot be applied globally due to potential cultural differences (Clyne,1994).

1.5. The Role of Politeness in Maintaining Positive Relationships

Politeness is an essential skill that helps individuals to build positive relationships and promotes effective communication. It plays a crucial role in maintaining these relationships by fostering respect, effective communication, and mutual understanding. It helps create a comfortable environment, reducing conflicts and enhancing collaboration.

Politeness involves showing consideration for other's feelings, opinions and perspectives. By using polite language and gestures, individuals convey respect which is essential for maintaining relationships. When people feel respected and valued they are more likely to engage in constructive dialogue, leading to healthier relationships.

Using politeness, can make the interaction avoid ambiguity and will give a good response between the speaker and the listener. Politeness is an indication of other people's consciousness of faces. It is consecutive to social range and social adjacency (Yule, 2010).

1.6. Politeness and culture

Politeness is a key aspect of communication, and it varies significantly across different cultures. Understanding these variations is essential for effective

communication, especially in a world that is more connected than ever. Politeness is crucial in every culture, but the ways in which it is expressed can vary widely. In some cultures politeness is shown through the use of formal language and titles, while in others, it is expressed through body language, tone of voice, or other non-verbal cues. For example, in Japanese culture, it is very important to use the correct level of formality and honorifics when addressing someone. On the other hand, in Australian culture, people tend to be more informal and casual, even in professional settings.

It has been mentioned previously that every culture has different norms including language norms. Concerning with the language norms, every language may have different politeness principle. In verbal cross cultural communication people have to learn politeness principle in the languages of the other cultures in order to avoid misunderstanding, as it is stated by Holmes (2001 p. 279) " the appropriate ways of speaking in different communities are clearly quite distinctive in a range of areas. Being polite involves understanding the social values which govern the way social dimensions such as status, solidarity, and formality are expressed."

According to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, culture significantly influences how politeness strategies are employed in communication. For instance, positive politeness strategies, which emphasise friendliness and camaraderie, might be more prevalent in cultures that value group harmony and solidarity. Conversely, negative politeness strategies which prioritise autonomy and non-imposition could be more common in cultures where freedom and privacy are valued.

1.6.1 Directness vs. Indirectness

In some cultures, it is considered polite to be direct and to the point. For example, in the United States and Germany, people value directness and appreciate when others get straight to the point. However, in other cultures, such as Japan and Korea, indirectness is preferred, and being too direct can be seen as rude or impolite.

1.6.2 Formality vs. Informality

The level of formality required in a conversation also varies from culture to culture. For example, in cultures like Japan and France, it is important to use formal language and titles when addressing someone, especially in professional situations.

Finally, understanding cultural variations in politeness is crucial for effective

communication in today's interconnected world. By being mindful of these variations and adjusting our language and behaviour accordingly, we can build stronger relationships with people from different cultures.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter tried to give an overview of the multifaceted world of politeness in which we defined politeness and its relation to the face, the review also emphasised politeness theories including Brown and Levinson's theory, Leech's Maxims and Grice's cooperative principle. As well as politeness strategies that contain five strategies arranged from the least to the more polite. Finally this chapter highlighted the relation of politeness with culture and how it varies across different cultures.

**CHAPTER TWO: THE POWER
OF POLITENESS IN
STUDENTS-TEACHERS
VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION**

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the crucial role of politeness strategies in shaping effective communication between students and teachers. It argues that politeness fosters positive relationships, optimises learning, and transcends physical classrooms, extending to online environments such as Facebook, Email, and Google Meet. However, the conversation does not end here; the chapter sheds light on students' awareness of politeness strategies in online interactions. It also provides previous studies on politeness strategies in online interactions.

2.2. The Importance of Politeness Strategies in Student-Teacher Interactions

In an educational setting, politeness must be enforced, as impoliteness breeds animosity between educators and their learners. Implementing politeness in classroom interactions leads to building healthy relationships among students and teachers, consequently fulfilling the objectives of the learning process. In short, students will assimilate the content imparted by the teacher if interactions in the classroom are productive.

According to Harmer (1998), a competent teacher should be able to correct his students without making them feel bad. To do that, teachers need to be committed to employing politeness strategies. When it comes to teaching languages, it is thought that being polite improves students' learning by creating a welcoming and lively environment in the classroom (Jian, 2010).

Cansolo (2006) added that the language classroom can be perceived as a discourse community and sociolinguistic environment where participants utilize multiple functions of language to create a communication system. He also noted that student-teacher contact is thought to have an impact on students' language development. Therefore, Payne-Woolridge (2010) claims that facework in the classroom can serve as a stand-in to provide a fresh viewpoint on how teachers discuss conduct with students. Face here refers to the emotional and social identity that each of us possesses and that we expect others to also possess (Yule, 2002).

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Additionally, maintaining social interactions requires the use of the addressee's name in conjunction with other vocatives, and first-name vocatives serve to highlight each participant's uniqueness in discourse (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, Finegan, 1999:1110). Therefore, Grundy (1995) asserts that using politeness strategies can encode the distance between speakers and their addressees: teachers generally use formal language, titles, and indirect requests to maintain their role as authority figures and establish a respectful learning environment. Students reciprocating with polite addresses and attentive listening foster mutual respect and professionalism.

2.3. Student-Teacher Online Communication

The field of education has undergone significant change as a result of current technological advancements, leading to a transition from a traditional classroom setting to an online or remote learning environment (Ng, 2022). Accordingly, many social media platforms are being utilised to improve the learning process. It is also found that the solution to the dilemma of education delivery in the present is through the utilisation of online-based platforms that can be done in a smooth manner (Nehe, 2021). Consequently, learners' interest and engagement in learning are improved when there is clear teacher-learner communication through the use of these digital communication tools (Kahu, Thomas, & Heinrich, 2022).

2.3.1. Facebook Communication

Facebook is a specialised messaging platform with free texting and video chat capabilities developed by Meta. Its main benefit is that anyone with a Facebook account and a reliable internet connection can use it for free to stay in touch, communicate with friends and family, and conduct business (Sehl, 2021). It makes sense that instructors and learners would use the mentioned social media platform to communicate. Facebook Messenger is one of the most commonly used in the setting up of education (Chng, Hsieh, & Lin, & Lin, 2022).

Additionally, the usage of Facebook Messenger for the purpose of academic consultation is seen to be positive compared to face-to-face interactions during class hours, as it provides information that serves to augment the learners' minds and bodies, offering them the senses of convenience, confidence, lower power distance, travel time

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savings, and most importantly, money savings (Tananuraksakul, 2018). According to Roblyer et al. (2010), for teachers who see teaching as establishing relationships with students, Facebook can be an effective way to connect. Students often prefer to ask reference questions online via Facebook (if available) rather than in person (face-to-face) (Roblyer et al., 2010).

Furthermore, more students agreed that they communicate frequently with instructors if they have a Facebook account and that they have an additional sense of connectedness in the classroom as a result of the Facebook connection (Sturgeon & Walker, 2009). Additionally, Lampe, Wohn, Vitak, Ellison, and Wash (2011) note the potential for students to collaborate on Facebook to reduce ambiguity in class.

2.3.2. Email Communication

Emails are a fantastic way to transmit messages using computers (Wallace & Wingate, 2001). Poling (1994) explains his personal experience interacting with learners via email. He discovered that email had many more benefits than drawbacks and strongly advised teachers to adopt it as a useful addition to in-class communication. Email was utilised by Atamian and DeMerville (1998) in place of office hours; all communications between students and teachers, except for in-class discussion, had been conducted by email. They discovered that students were quite pleased with this arrangement, thought it made the teacher more approachable, and suggested utilising it in the future.

According to Polling (1994), email can be helpful in student counselling because it is a non-confrontational medium. Following a poor exam result, a student could feel too depressed to speak with his instructor and would consider email to be a good substitute for talking. Thus, students can hone their computer communication abilities by participating in the email list, either by writing or reading messages (Kusmaul et al., 1996). Additionally, knowing that they may contact the instructor at any time for assistance will provide them with a sense of security (Poling, 1994). Due to the lack of face-to-face interaction, email offers a certain amount of anonymity (privacy) (Lewis et al., 1997).

2.3.3. Google Meet Communication

Google Workspace is fully integrated with Google Meet, a virtual video conferencing service offered by Google. Anyone with an account on Google Meet can host an online meeting for up to 100 people for a maximum of 24 hours. With Google Meet, users may share their screens, connect via audio or video, and present documents, worksheets, or presentations. Google Meet generates comprehensive captions by utilising the presenters' voices and selected language. Additionally, it offers 720p HD video recording. Its ability to encrypt every meeting is an additional feature worth noting (Huynh Thanh et al., 2023).

Lessons and lectures are frequently given via video conferencing to students who are located in different locations (Knipe, D., & Lee, M., 2002). Using video conferencing allows instructors to record their lectures, cut down on teaching time, and free up more time for content preparation (Freeman, 1998). Additionally, students have an equal opportunity to interact with the instructors and the course. Since video conferencing is indirect, it creates a less stressful setting for communication than in-person interactions (Lee, 2006). Jung (2009) claims that students and foreign teachers can communicate via video conference instead of in person, which is advantageous for time and location constraints. To reduce their anxiety, students can also use the text chat feature.

2.4. Politeness in Student-Teacher Virtual Communication

Politeness is important in all forms of communication, especially electronic communication because the latter is more impersonal than face-to-face interaction, and it can be difficult to convey tone and intent. Yus (2011) claims that politeness utterance is an obligation in both face-to-face and virtual communication acts. Therefore, recent research has turned to politeness strategies in online interactions. According to Hallijian (2014), email interactions call for students to have a high degree of pragmatic competence in interaction, which frequently results in face-threatening activities. It also calls for certain politeness methods to soften the request. Students should be aware of the impact of their emails from their teachers' viewpoints (Bolkan and Holmgren, 2012).

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As a whole, online interactions require students to master specific communication etiquette, including using thoughtful greetings, avoiding informal language and slang terms, and excessive use of emojis and abbreviations, which can be confusing or unprofessional in a student-teacher communication setting. Further, grammatical errors can create a negative impression.

2.5 The impact of Technology on Politeness

Technology has revolutionised communication, offering how people interact and express politeness. With the rise of digital communication channels like texting, social media, and email, the dynamics of politeness have shifted.

One significant impact is the brevity of digital communication. In quick chats or text messages, people often use abbreviations, emojis, or informal language, which can lead to a perceived lack of politeness. Additionally, when we talk through screens, we miss facial expressions and tone of voice, which can sometimes result in misunderstandings and make us seem less polite. Furthermore, social media encourages casual language and abbreviations which seem impolite in formal settings (Tech Crunch, 2018).

On the other hand, technology influences politeness positively by offering positive aspects, such as facilitating expressions of gratitude through quick messages and maintaining connections across distances. Technology also offers new ways to express politeness. For example, the use of emojis and stickers can add emotional nuance to messages, enhancing politeness and conveying tone in digital conversations. Moreover, technology also helps us talk to people from different cultures but this can lead to misunderstandings about politeness because of different cultural norms (BBC, 2022).

Overall, while technology can challenge traditional politeness, it also offers new ways to be courteous and stay connected.

2.6. Students Awareness of Politeness Strategies in Online Interaction

Politeness strategies are crucial in social interactions as well as with students and teachers communication. In classroom interaction, it is needed for students and teachers to have effective communication in the teaching and learning process, whether it is in offline or online interaction (Wahuyuni, 2018). Unfortunately,

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sometimes this communication does not run well. For instance, in online written interaction, students tend to write something freely to their teachers and not really pay attention to their word choices or the use of politeness strategies. They assume that their teachers will have no problem, which can lead to an uncomfortable atmosphere. Therefore, the politeness strategy needed to be taught. In this regard, a comparison study conducted by an Algerian Master student from the University of Mostaganem found that the majority of students in both levels (Master 2 and 3rd year) embraced the notion that studying politeness theory for a licence would be preferable to pursuing a master's degree in it. It is possible to teach manners in depth along with a license that enables learners to successfully communicate and engage in politeness, and the majority of students wanted to see that in society as a whole, not only at universities (Chatir, 2020).

2.7. Previous Studies on Politeness Strategies in Online Interactions

Pariera (2006) investigated the value of tactful conversation techniques for addressing taboo topics. 29 college students took part in the study, sending a series of emails to both strangers and friends. The study's foundation was a comparison of the many politeness strategies used. and based on how serious the taboos were, five key linguistic characteristics were examined. The results were contrasted with the politeness model proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), and the findings indicated that emails can create their own set of customs for politeness. Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) affirmed that politeness conventions in email appear to be work in progress, and native speakers demonstrate greater resources in creating e-polite messages to their professors than non-native speakers.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, researchers investigated the use of brief messages on social media as a strategy for encouraging social interactions and communication that prioritise linguistic graces and emotional intelligence. Miscommunication-related interpersonal disputes have the potential to develop into more complex problems affecting people individually, in groups, in communities, or in institutions. The research highlights that when sending or receiving messages on social media, it is important for both parties to take into account their respective cultural backgrounds.

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Politeness and cultural similarities will help others to understand what is being said, reduce conflict, and improve communication (Hartini et al., 2023).

Another study conducted in the Algerian context shows that politeness is not entirely present on Algerian Facebook because of Facebookers who disregard it and are unaware of its consequences (Safi and Toumi, 2021).

2.8. Conclusion

To conclude, after exploring the importance of politeness strategies in student-teacher interactions in the traditional classroom, this chapter has shown how the intentional use of respectful language and considerate actions build bridges across the digital divide, fostering positive online interactions between students and teachers by choosing some digital communication tools (Facebook, email, Google Meet) and explaining their individual features. The chapter increases students' awareness of politeness techniques in online interactions and provides a review of earlier research on the subject.

**CHAPTER THREE:
METHODOLOGY AND DATA
ANALYSIS**

3.1. Introduction

The upcoming chapter is dedicated to the methodology followed to answer the research questions, as well as to test the hypothesis suggested, the analysis of the obtained data, and the interpretation of the results.

3.2. Research Aim

The present dissertation investigates politeness strategies utilised in Master 2 EFL student's emails devoted to their teachers. The study aims to:

- Identify the types of politeness strategies students utilise in their emails to teachers and how effectively they use these strategies.
- Monitor teachers' perception of students' emails and the importance they place on politeness strategies and if there are any cultural influences on their perceptions.

3.3. Research Design

A framework of methodologies and strategies selected by a researcher to integrate different study components in a reasonably logical way to effectively address the research topic is known as research design. It offers guidance on "how" to carry out research with a specific technique. Every researcher has a list of research questions that need to be evaluated; research design can help with this. With research design, a draft of the best way to do research can be created (Blaikie, 2000). According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010), it consists of components like a research plan, research materials, and a research approach.

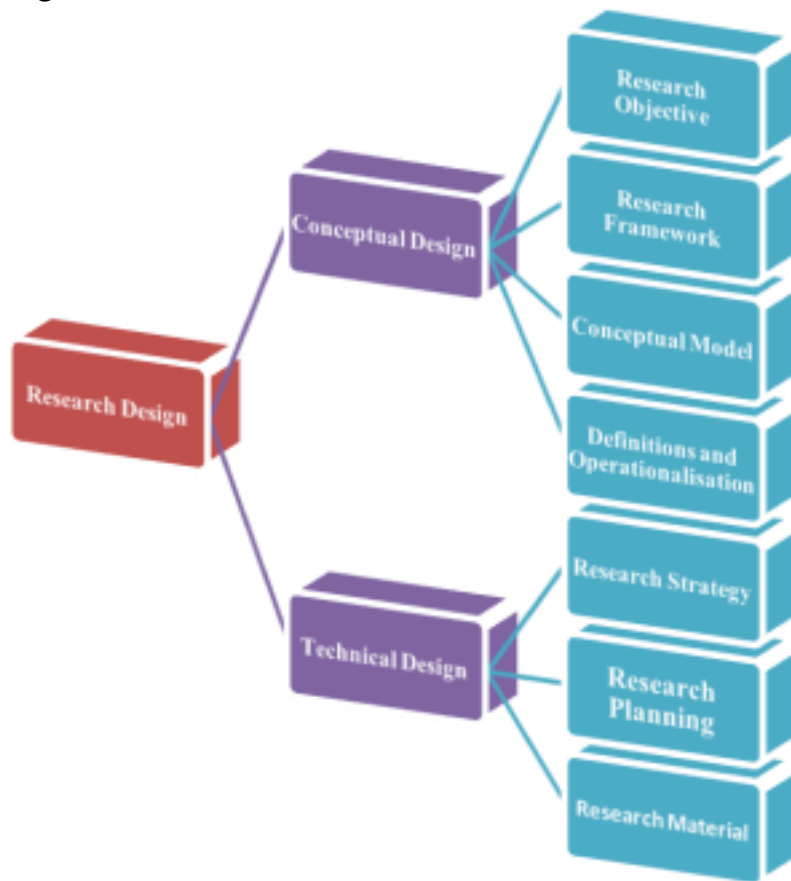


Figure 2: Overall Picture of the Research Design (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010)

3.4. Methodological Approach

To examine politeness strategies employed by the students when emailing their teachers, we adopted a qualitative approach. This later aims to explore and understand phenomena through in-depth examination and interpretation of non-numerical data, often utilising methods such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis. Many scholars emphasise its focus on understanding context, meanings, and subjective experiences.

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

In this research, the qualitative method involves a content analysis to examine the students' emails directed to their EFL teacher and investigate the nature of polite forms used by the students. And teacher's interviews to explore their view on the politeness strategies used by students.

3.5. Population and Sampling

Sampling theory was developed to increase the reliability and cost-effectiveness of research findings (Singh, 2006). Since when you conduct research about a group of people, it's rarely possible to collect data from every person in that group. Instead, you select a sample. The sample is the group of individuals who will actually participate in the research (McCombes, 2023). According to (Fink, 2003) population is a broader group, of which a sample is a fraction or subset. An accurate sample is a small representation of the population it comes from, similar to it but smaller. This research is targeted at two types of participants are presented as follows:

3.5.1 Students

A Sample of (17) email messages was collected from EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun university, Tiaret. In particular, my second year Master, linguistics. The reasons behind choosing this sample is that Master two students presumed to use emails frequently to contact their supervisors. Than to make students cognisant about the existence of politeness in supervisor-supervisee email interactions. Furthermore, although the students have reached a good level of linguistic awareness, their teachers still complain about their impolite emails.

3.5.2 Teachers

Six (06) experienced teachers of English at the university level were selected randomly from the same faculty. A series of questions were asked during the interview with each of those teachers about their experiences with students' email interactions and their perceptions of the politeness strategies employed in these emails.

3.6 Fieldwork

In qualitative research, the setting is frequently used to describe the precise area where data is collected, such as a classroom, workplace, or community. Researchers can observe and interact with people in their natural setting to acquire a better understanding of their experiences and behaviours.

Careful selection of appropriate fieldwork is critical for achieving substantial results. According to Creswell (2014), researchers often battle for weeks, if not months, to get approval from others in a certain situation.

This research was carried out in the English department of Ibn Khaldoun University. The latter is a coeducational institution located in Tiaret, a prominent city in the west north of Algeria, (371 kilometres) from the centre of Algiers city for 5 hours by car.

3.7 Research Instruments

The best data collection and analysis technique for a given study is determined by the research issue under investigation and the research philosophical perspective or paradigm (Mathers et al., 2007). Using the politeness model criteria created by Brown and Livenson (1987), a content analysis of a set of emails sent by students to their teachers is one of the current research's instruments. In addition, a semi-structured interview was handed out to teachers to discuss their experiences emailing students and to hear their thoughts on online communication.

3.7.1. Content Analysis

Through content analysis, researchers study items of social communication. These are usually written materials or verbatim transcriptions of conversations that have been recorded (Berg, 2001). In general, content analysis can be characterised as "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages" (Hoisri, 1968, p. 608). Berg (2001) argued that content analysis can be useful in qualitative research and that textual element "counts" are only a tool for data identification, organisation, indexing, and retrieval.

According to Berelson et al. (1952), content analysis counts seven primary elements in written messages, words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, objects, concepts, and semantics.

Content analysis was used to systematically analyse written content on a sample of 17 emails, sent by M2 EFL students to their supervisors. The focus is on identifying and analysing the politeness strategies employed by students when emailing their teachers.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interview

Data is gathered through interviews, where oral-verbal stimuli are presented and oral-verbal responses are given in return. Both in-person and, if feasible, telephone interviews can be employed using this methodology (Kothari, 2004).

According to Rubin (2011), a semi-structured interview is a research method where a participant and interviewer have a guided conversation to collect qualitative data. It is in between an unstructured interview, which is more flexible and allows for a free-flowing conversation, and a fully structured interview, which follows a preset set of questions.

Overall, interviewing is an art based on scientific principles, aiming to create a friendly atmosphere of trust and confidence. In addition to accurately recording responses and answering valid questions, the interviewer must also raise any uncertainties with thoughtful inquiries. While guiding the respondent towards the intended topic and preventing unrelated chatter, the interviewer should be cordial, polite, conversational, and objective (Kothari, 2004).

Height questions (Q1_ Q8) were reviewed with 6 teachers from the English department at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. The interviews aims to:

- _ Understand teachers' experiences with student email interactions.
- _ Investigate the impact of politeness strategies on teachers' responses and perceptions.

3.8 Analysis of the Students' Emails (Content Analysis)

In order to explore the politeness strategies employed by students when emailing their teachers, a collection of 17 emails was investigated using Brown and Livenson's politeness theory (1987).

1/ Positive Politeness

1. *Hi, miss I am your master 2 linguistic student. I asked you last time to supervise me.*
2. *Hello, dear miss, I hope this email finds you well. Do we have an exam tomorrow?*
3. *Good evening sir, I am sorry to disturb you at this time, I missed the TD exam.....With all my respects.*
4. *Salem sir, can I reformulate the outline of the third chapter, because I find it too long and I choose to start with methodology.*
5. *Hello sir, attached is the questionnaire; I am waiting for your feedback.*
6. *Good afternoon Mrs....I hope you are doing great. It's.....a master 2 student I'm writing to you concerning my dissertation. I would ask you to be my supervisor. I already have some topics in mind but I'm still confused a little bit ...I hope this email reaches you as soon as possible and I'm patiently waiting for your reply. My best regards.*
7. *Dear Miss, it's me again. I hope you are fine. Miss please could you confirm if you are going to assess me or not so that I can talk to other teachers. I would be pleased If accept my request because I really want to work with you and I know I will reach my goals with your assistance.*
8. *Hello sir, we hope this email finds you well. We have worked on the Questionnaire, would you please take a look at it and tell us what we should add or change. Thank you.*

The data above represents positive politeness. Students greet their teachers by an informal greeting. Like "Hello" which seem to be impolite to be said to someone with a higher status than the speaker, and which is typically said to someone close to equal power. Also, students' messages include the use of In-group identity markers, a substrategy of positive politeness that convey group membership including the use of address forms like "Dear miss". In addition students try to be optimistic by saying "I hope this email finds you well" "I hope you are doing great" "hope you are fine ". Students exaggerate interest by using "please" "I'm patiently waiting for your reply "and finally they give gifts to the recipient by writing "best regards" "regards" and "Thank you ".

2/ Bald on-record

1. *Sir, what happens to people who didn't pass the test? At least share with us the lectures.*
2. *Salem mis, I don't know why you gave me 11 despite I attend.*
3. *Sir,I'm not attending the Session today, so it will be tomorrow, sir okay*
4. *Hello miss, I can not attend tomorrow's meeting.*

The examples represent bald on-record strategy. In the first example the student did not greet the teacher and instead exclaimed "At least share with us the lectures". He stated his intention without regard for the position of the hearer. It can be regarded as impolite, because it is not suitable to make this statement to someone with higher status and power. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) might be considered rude. In the second example the student uses a bald on-record strategy by showing disagreement to the teacher. His message and choice of words can be considered as impolite and disrespectful. While in the third example the student was disrespectful and rude in the delivery of his statement "Sir, I'm not attending the session today, so it will be tomorrow"because it is not suitable to Make this statement to someone with authority and power. And by saying "Sir, okay" he made the decision on his own to reschedule the lecture. The last example demonstrates directedness by expressing the inability of attending without any softening statement or explanations.

3/ Negative Politeness

1. *Good morning miss. I hope this email finds you well. I am sorry for disturbing you. I need your RP if you don't mind, of course. Thank you in advance.*
2. *Good evening sir, I am sorry to contact you at this late hour. I wasn't informed that there will be a test today. Is it possible to re-do it next week? I would love to have your drawback. I apologise again for this contact and I can't wait to hear your response.*
3. *Good evening, miss. I hope this email finds you well. I am a master two linguistics students. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am seeking your assistance in completing a brief questionnaire. Your insights would greatly contribute to the data collection for my research, and I would sincerely appreciate your participation.*

In this case students' emails lean heavily on negative politeness strategies, in the first example the student show respect to the teacher's time and avoid being imposed by using an indirect request; the actual request for RP is hinted with I need your RP,

making it less demanding and giving the recipient the option to decline without feeling pressured. The student also implemented statements like "sorry for disturbing you" and "if you don't mind, of course" to appreciate the teacher's autonomy.

In the second example the student opens with an apology for contacting the teacher late ("I am sorry to contact you at this late hour"). He uses hedges; the request for a retake is phrased as a question ("Is it possible to re-do it next week?") to soften the demand. Overall, the email places a high priority on causing the teacher as little inconvenience as possible and focuses on the student's desire for improvement ("I would love to have your feedback") rather than placing blame. In the last example, the student introduced himself and mentioned the reason behind this contact (I am currently working on my dissertation) to show appreciation for the teacher's time. Also, he uses respectful statements to ask for assistance (I am seeking your assistance) and the statement (brief questionnaire) to minimise the perceived time required.

4/Off-Record

1. *Hello dear miss, I'd really appreciate the opportunity to meet with you this week to discuss our project.*
2. *Hello miss, during the class discussion there was one point I wanted to ask about, However, I was hoping to gain a clearer understanding in a more private setting.*

Example one represents an off-record politeness strategy by indirectly hinting at a meeting request. The indirectness reduces the perceived demand and avoids being overly forceful. (Showing more awareness of the negative face). However, the student who chooses this strategy risks being misunderstood what makes this approach works best in cultures that value politeness and indirectness. Similar to example one, in example two the student hinted at a private conversation.

From the analysis above, we note that students often want to be polite when emailing teachers, but they might not always use the most appropriate strategies. This highlights how much email etiquette instruction is needed and how crucial it is to take cultural norms into account while interacting online.

3.9. Analysis of the Teachers 'Interviews

To validate the research results and gain deeper insights into teachers' perspectives on politeness strategies, teacher's interviews were needed.

Question-item 1: *Can you briefly describe your experience with student's email interactions?*

- Highly Positive
- Positive
- Negative

Out of the six interviewees, four (4/6) claimed that they had positive experiences, while two characterised their experiences as highly positive.

Question-item 2: *How frequently do you receive emails from students?*

In relation to this inquiry, the responses provided by the interviewees exhibited variation. Two individuals claim that they regularly receive emails from students, while one asserts that he receives emails occasionally, and the other specifies that he receives them approximately three times each month. According to the fifth surveyed teacher, he receives one email every month. Additionally, the sixth teacher reports receiving emails more frequently compared to previous years.

Question-item 3: *Have you encountered situations where students use inappropriate politeness strategy when making requests or asking for assistance?*

Most of the polled instructors (5/6) confirm that students often use inappropriate politeness strategies when contacting them. One of the fifth teachers mentioned that a student once used the teacher's first name, and he found it rude from his side. Another teacher commented that some students use very bad language, and sometimes they use Arabic to communicate. And only one teacher said that he never faced a situation where one of his students was impolite.

Question-item 4: *Have you ever modified your response based on the level of politeness exhibited in a student email?*

Three polled teachers demonstrate that they prioritise the email's content and rarely modify their responses based on politeness (T1: Not many times. T2: Sometimes I do, but other times I just ignore it. T3: Never.) Another interviewee declares that he focuses on positive reinforcement. To clarify, he said that when students use polite language, they are likely to receive encouraging responses. While another teacher asserts that he does not hesitate to warn students about the language they are using, the

last surveyed teacher simply confirmed that he modifies his responses based on the etiquette used in the email.

Question-item 5: *From your perspective, do effective politeness strategies influence your response or perception of the student?*

All of the interviewees agreed that effective politeness strategies influence the level of communication between students and teachers. One added that it does not hurt to positively react against students' inappropriate use of polite language with their teachers. They should know what is right and what is wrong.

Question-item 6: *In what ways do you think politeness strategies contribute to building a positive student-teacher relationship in email communication?*

Regarding this question, the surveyed teachers offered a variety of answers as follows:

T1: Politeness strategies have a significant effect on the relationship between teachers and their students in the sense it lessens the threat to face and feel comfortable with each other.

T2: Politeness strategies create a friendly atmosphere and enable the student to overcome communication barriers.

T3: It maintains a level of respect in communication and reinforces the feeling of professionalism and strengthens the academic relation they have.

T4: It gives the opportunity to learners to enhance their relationships with teachers.

T5: Politeness builds trust and confidence.

T6: The use of polite language by students will encourage the teacher to keep the channels of communication open and make the teacher very helpful.

Question-item 7: *Based on your experience what is the most effective politeness strategy/strategies for students to use when addressing you via email (positive, negative, on record, off-record.)? Elaborate briefly.*

All of the polled teachers preferred that students use the negative politeness strategy in their email interactions. Teachers provided several reasons for this choice, including: The negative approach points out the teacher's position of authority and proves the student's respect for their role. Negative strategies like apologies, hedges, and indirect requests help minimise the feeling of imposing on the teacher's time. Negative politeness corresponds to the expectations of professional communication that ensure healthy relationships between students and teachers.

Question-item 8: *What advice would you give to students when it comes to email etiquette and politeness?*

About this question the six targeted teachers provided a set of advice to students, outlined below:

- Students should be aware of the way to interact with their teachers. They should learn when, where and how to positively and formally respond to their teachers' emails.
- Email your teachers in the kindest way, use formal language, and be as respectful as possible.
- Do not forget greetings.
- Mention the essence of their correspondence in the subject area.
- Use the teacher's last name and not their first name.
- Distance should be respected, students should know how to communicate with others taking into consideration age and status.

Based on the interviewees' responses, it can be deduced that most teachers emphasised the importance of politeness and formality in students' emails.

3.10. Discussion and Interpretations

The present study examines the politeness strategies employed by Master 2 EFL students when emailing their supervisors at the English department at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. This section discusses the findings of the obtained data. The results will allow for answering the research questions while also confirming or disproving the hypotheses.

The compiled data from students' emails (the content analysis) shows that students often employ a variety of politeness strategies, with differing degrees of effectiveness. Positive politeness is the most common strategy, but it can sometimes be misused, leading to damaged "face" (e.g., using greetings like "Hi" and "Hello" or expressions that might be perceived as overly familiar or manipulative ("dear miss," "I choose to start with methodology"), or making demands without proper softening.

Bald on-record is the least polite strategy and can be perceived as rude or disrespectful since students threaten the negative face of the receiver (teachers) when using imperative syntactic structure (e.g., "Share with us").

However, when using negative strategies, students avoid negative face-threatening acts because they frequently use formal language, suitable terms, and hedges. Students use the off-record strategy a few times, despite the fact that it is considered the most polite strategy in politeness norms, yet they fall into the trap of ambiguity and indirectness. This is determined by the cultural background of the community they are interacting with, which emphasises directness, autonomy and non-imposition.

This issue was confirmed when interviewing a group of teachers who chose the negative strategy as the most appropriate strategy for students to address their teachers, as mentioned in the seventh question of the teacher's interviews. Teachers value politeness and formality, even if they occasionally ignore students' inappropriate use of language and do not require strict communication etiquette.

3.11. Study Limitations

The current study has several drawbacks inherent to surveys, including sampling limitations. Emails were acquired from a small group of students, whereas a large number of students were hesitant to share their email messages.

Furthermore, politeness strategies can differ significantly across cultures. The study's findings might not be applicable to students or teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Finally, students might feel uncomfortable knowing their emails are being analysed, even if they are anonymised.

3.12. Conclusion

As the main focus of the current research was to investigate politeness strategies employed by students when emailing their teachers, chapter three provided a detailed discussion of the gleaned data. The results indicated that students employ various politeness strategies (positive, negative, on record, and off-record) of Brown and Levinson (1987). However, it was found that positive politeness was the most prominent, while negative politeness strategy is considered to be the most polite and appropriate in our culture. This fact demonstrates that cultural norms can influence communication styles, and what might seem normal in one culture could be considered impolite in another.

Recommendations for further study

- ✓ Investigating the effect of politeness on students-teachers relationship.
- ✓ Conducting a cross-cultural comparative study to examine politeness. strategies differ between students from different cultural backgrounds by including participants from different regions.
- ✓ Exploring the influence of different digital communication platforms on the use of politeness strategies.
- ✓ Investigating the politeness strategies employed by teachers in their responses on students' email messages.
- ✓ Conducting a similar study with a larger sample of students and teachers.
- ✓ Examining students' awareness of politeness strategies and to what extent do they understand these strategies.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The present study, titled "Unveiling Politeness Strategies in Students-Teachers Email Interactions," explored the politeness strategies employed in email interactions between students and teachers. To precisely measure conversational style and the quality of electronic communications, Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework was utilised as the evaluative criterion.

The research was structured into three chapters. The first chapter provides a theoretical background on politeness theories, with an in-depth focus on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The second chapter examines the role of politeness in interactions, highlighting students' awareness of politeness strategies in online communications. The third chapter details the methodology used for data collection, along with an analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings to address the research objectives.

This dissertation employed a qualitative design to gather insights on the investigated theme. To test the hypotheses and answer the research questions, a text corpus analysis was conducted on the email messages of Master's students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand teachers' perceptions of these messages. The interview questions focused on how politeness strategies influence teachers' perceptions and the importance of these strategies in fostering positive student-teacher relationships through email communication.

Based on the analysis of the messages and teachers' responses, the study confirms the initial hypothesis: students employ various politeness strategies when addressing their teachers. The most frequently used strategy by students was positive politeness, whereas teachers perceived negative politeness as more appropriate, influenced by Algeria's cultural norms that deem negative politeness as the highest form of politeness.

However, the research acknowledges certain limitations. Firstly, the sample size and the number of emails analysed were insufficient to draw definitive conclusions. Therefore, further studies are necessary. Secondly, Algeria is a linguistically diverse country; what is considered polite in one region may not be regarded as such in

● another. Thus, future research examining the same topic in different regions is crucial ●
for understanding the cross-cultural variations of politeness in Algeria.

GLOSSARY

Linguistics: The scientific study of language.

Face-threatening act (FTAs): actions that could undermine someone's positive face or impose on their negative face.

Positive face: Refers to the need to be well treated and accepted by others.

Negative face: Refers to the need to be independent, to have freedom, and not to be imposed on by others.

Etiquette: Social code of manners/ a set of norms and expectations around how to behave in various interactions in society.

Positive politeness: Strategies that show solidarity with the hearer.

Negative politeness: Strategies that minimise imposition on the hearer.

Off-record strategies: Indirect hints or suggestions.

Universality: The idea that something applies to all cases or all cultures.

Maxim: General principle guiding conversation.

Discourse community: A group of people who share a common way of using language.

Vocatives: Words used to address someone directly, such as "hello" or "teacher".

Pragmatic competence: The ability to use language effectively in different social situations.

Taboo topics: Subjects that are considered unsuitable for discussion.

Cultural background: The traditions, beliefs, and practices of a particular society.

Hedges: Words or expressions that lessen the impact of what is conveyed.

Perceived imposition: The feeling that bothering someone.

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APPENDICES

Teachers'interview

This research aims to investigate politeness strategies employed by students when emailing their teachers.

1. Can you briefly describe your experience with students' email interactions?

- Highly Positive
- Positive
- Negative

2. How frequently do you receive emails from students?

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Have you encountered situations where students' use **inappropriate** politeness strategy when making requests or asking for assistance?

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4. Have you ever modified your response based on the level of politeness exhibited in a student's email?

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5. From your perspective, do effective politeness strategies influence your response or perception of the student?

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6. In what ways do you think politeness strategies contribute to building a positive student-teacher relationship in email communication?

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APPENDICES

7. Based on your experience what is the most effective politeness strategy/strategies for students to use when addressing you via email (positive, negative, on record. off- record.)? Elaborate briefly.

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.....

8. What advice would you give to students when it comes to email etiquette and politeness?

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.....
.....

Thank you for your time and insights

ملخص

تسعى هذه الأطروحة إلى التحقق من استخدام استراتيجيات التآدب المستخدمة في التفاعل عبر البريد الإلكتروني بين الطالب والمعلم، وكشف النقاب عن الإستراتيجية السائدة ودراسة كيفية إدراك المعلمين لهذه الأفعال التواصلية، ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، أجريت دراسة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة ابن خلدون مع الماجستير اثنين من طلاب اللغويات. تم استخدام منهجية نوعية تشمل تحليل المحتوى مقابلات المعلمين. تكشف النتائج عن انتشار استراتيجيات المجاملة الإيجابية في رسائل البريد الإلكتروني للطلاب، مما يشير إلى الميل نحو بناء علاقة وتعزيز العلاقات الإيجابية. ومع ذلك، تؤكد المقابلات مع المعلمين مدى ملائمة استراتيجيات المداراة السلبية لأن هذه الاستراتيجيات غالبًا ما تحترم السلطة والحدود، والتي تتوافق مع توقعات المعلمين في البيئة المهنية.

Summary

This dissertation seeks to investigate the use of politeness strategies employed in student-teacher email interaction, to unveil the predominant strategy and to examine how teachers perceive these communicative acts, to achieve this aim , a study was conducted in the English department, Ibn khaldoun University with master two linguistics students. Employing a qualitative methodology, encompassing content analysis and teacher interviews. The findings reveal a prevalence of positive politeness strategies in student emails, indicating an inclination towards building rapport and fostering positive relationships. However, teachers' interviews underscore the appropriateness of negative politeness strategies because such strategies often respect authority and boundaries, which align with teachers' expectations in a professional setting.

Résumé

Cette thèse cherche à étudier l'utilisation des stratégies de politesse employées dans l'interaction par courrier électronique entre étudiants et enseignants, à dévoiler la stratégie prédominante et à examiner comment les enseignants perçoivent ces actes de communication. Pour atteindre cet objectif, une étude a été menée au département d'anglais de l'Université Ibn Khaldoun avec les étudiants de master deux en linguistique. Utiliser une méthodologie qualitative, englobant l'analyse du contenu et des entretiens avec les enseignants. Les résultats révèlent une prévalence de stratégies de politesse positive dans les courriels des étudiants, indiquant une tendance à établir des relations et à favoriser des relations positives. Cependant, les entretiens avec les enseignants soulignent la pertinence des stratégies de politesse négative, car ces stratégies respectent souvent l'autorité et les limites, ce qui correspond aux attentes des enseignants dans un cadre professionnel.