

Department of English Language and Literature, University of Bahrain



The Use of Politeness Strategies in the Realization of Speech Act of Disagreement by EFL Learners

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master Degree in Applied English Language Studies

Prepared by

Fatima Abdullah Jaafar

20145273

Supervised by

Dr. Nuri Rahuma Ageli

Associate professor of linguistics

English Language and Literature Department

Collage of Arts

University of Bahrain

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the differences between the politeness strategies used by university EFL learners and American native speakers in making disagreement. Using Brown and Levinson's (1978) model, the study examined the variables of gender, social status, and social distance. The participants were 63 EFL learners (41 females and 22 males), and 20 native speakers (10 females and 10 males). The EFL learners who took part in this study were EFL learners who were currently studying in the English Language and Literature Department at the University of Bahrain. All of them were in their fourth year of study and above (e.g. fifth-year students, sixth-year students, or more). The reason behind this choice was that they were considered advanced students who can use the English language appropriately. The tool used to gather information was a Discourse Completion Task which was adopted from a previous study done by Khoirunnisa and Hardjanto (2018), and modified by the researcher to fit the needs of this study. The results of this study showed that the reason why EFL learners seemed more or less polite was because native speakers chose to apply higher or lower percentages of politeness strategies to fit the needs of the different situations, whereas EFL learners used similar percentages of those strategies in most of the situations. This was due to EFL learners' insufficient competence in the English language. Further, EFL learners were still aware of the necessity of using different politeness strategies in different situations, and thus there were some changes in their use of them depending on the situation. Moreover, the study revealed that female EFL learners used slightly more positive politeness strategies than male EFL learners. In terms of importance, gender was shown to be more important than social status in determining the types of politeness strategies employed by EFL learners.

Key words: Disagreement, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record politeness, bald on-record.

Dedication

To my mother, who supported me throughout my academic journey.

To my father, husband, and mother-in-law, who offered me their help whenever I needed it. To my teacher Azhar, who believed in me. And finally, to my best friend

Irene, *'I dedicate this work to you'*.

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1. List of abbreviations

- EFL: English as a Foreign Language.
- DCT: Discourse Completion Task.
- DWDC: Dramatic Written Discourse Completion.
- ESP: English for Specific Purposes.
- FTA: Face Threatening Act.

2. Introduction

Politeness is an important social term nowadays, for no one wants to be deemed rude when interacting with others. This concept has been widely examined by different theorists within the field of pragmatics. Also, one of the most famous theoretical models used for politeness is that of Brown and Levinson (1967), which breaks down politeness into 4 different strategies. That model has been widely explored, as well as applied to various fields of research.

One of the biggest areas in which Brown and Levinson's (1967) model is used is Literature. Several literary books, plays, and films were examined using that model. Through applying it to literary works, researchers were able to either support the general ideas of those works, or look for any hidden messages within them, for example, messages that supports feminism (e.g. Noviani, 2014, Afidha, 2015, and Eshreteh and Draweesh, 2018)

Also, another famous territory that has utilized the earlier mentioned framework is politeness and gender differences. Researchers got excessively

rigorous in trying to figure out which of the two genders was more polite. Despite all of their attempts, this piece of information is still a mystery, as some researchers say that females are more polite than males (e.g. Hameed, 2010, and Ramadhani, Gurning, and Sibarani, 2014) and others say both of the genders use the same amounts of politeness strategies (e.g. Kazerooni and Shams, 2015, and Ismail, 2017).

Further, an important field that frequently utilizes the aforementioned model is the one that deals with foreign language learning, and the differences between the language used by native speakers and that used by foreign language learners, especially English i.e. EFL learners. The model was employed to find out, inter alia, who used more politeness strategies, EFL learners or native speakers. Another purpose of its application was to find out whether the first language of EFL learners affected their use of politeness strategies in English (e.g. Qari, 2017, and Farnia and Yazdani, 2018). This field is where the current study stands.

3. Theoretical framework

To begin with, the term ‘politeness’ is rather vague. In fact, to this day, no one has come up with a proper definition of it yet, despite all of the countless attempts to do so. The reason behind this is that all of the people who tried to define it ended up with unsatisfactory results. The most famous of them all is Brown and Levinson’s (1967) definition, which is that politeness is “a set of linguistic means for softening face threatening acts,” (p.3). This explanation of politeness has been severely criticized for decades, for it gives the idea that social

interactions are perilous settings instead of essential everyday practices. (Watts, Ide and Ehlich, 2005)

When it comes to the theory of politeness, it started with Tiryakian and Goffman in 1967. In that particular year, they came up with a new concept they called ‘face’. they explained that such a notion refers to any person’s ‘self-image’ and social worth. In 1978, Brown and Levinson adopted that concept and added more layers to it, dividing it into two types: positive and negative. The reason being is that, for them, a person’s ‘self-image’ needs not only to be preserved (negative face), but it also needs to be enhanced at times (positive face). In other words, if a person tries to lessen the effect of an imposition on another interlocutor so that he/she does not get hurt, the person is using negative face. On the other hand, if a person is attempting to make another interlocuter feel good about himself/herself, then the person is using positive face. Furthermore, as mentioned above, they considered social interactions as being threatening contexts, and thus people involved in them have to use different strategies to either avoid harming others or make them feel good about themselves. (Bouchara, 2009)

Further, Brown and Levinson (1978) claimed that all of the daily conversations people have could be broken down into four different strategies. They put those strategies on a scale, from the politest strategy to the least polite strategy. The politest strategy is off record. This strategy involves complete avoidance of any perceived threat to the other interlocutor’s face through indirectness. For example, a guest might avoid asking the host to close the air conditioner directly. Instead, he/she (the guest) can throw hints at the host to let him that he/she wants him to close the air conditioner, by saying “it’s cold”, for instance. The second politest strategy is positive politeness which is concerned with trying to make others feel good about themselves. For instance, a person

might compliment his/her aunt's cooking before asking her to cook him/her something. After that comes negative politeness which is mostly about trying to reduce the threat of interactions. An example of it is the use of hedging devices. Last but not least, there is bald on-record, which is the least polite strategy and which contains no attempt to protect the other interlocutor's face. (Bouchara, 2009)

Furthermore, despite the fact that Brown and Levinson (1978) placed all of their four strategies under the title of 'politeness strategies,' only the positive, negative, and off-record strategies can be called that. The reason is that the strategy of bald on-record demonstrates no attempt to regulate speech as to lessen the threat of offending someone. This fact was neither explained nor mentioned anywhere, but researchers were totally aware of it, as most of them excluded bald on-record from their quests to find who is more polite (e.g. Ogiermann, 2009).

Moreover, unlike bald on-record and off record, the two strategies of positive and negative politeness contain different sub-strategies/techniques/methods within them. For example, negative politeness can not only be used through hedging devices, but it can also be employed through giving reasons to the other interlocutor before asking him/her to do something. Some other ways negative politeness can be applied is asking questions, showing the other interlocutor that the speaker is just expressing his/her personal opinion, and highlighting that everyone has the right to have a unique opinion on a particular matter. On the other hand, positive politeness can be utilized through greetings, complimenting, showing comradery, giving hope and encouragement, adding a sense of humour, using honorifics, highlighting respect, portraying common experience, being thankful and appreciative, expressing sympathy, and stressing understanding. (Mulyono, Amalia, and Suryoputro, 2019)

4. Literature review

As mentioned in the introduction, politeness strategies have been widely investigated in different areas and for different purposes. Below is a brief overview of some studies that dealt with rather similar objectives to the present study.

a. Comparing between EFL learners and English native speakers in relation to politeness strategies

Politeness strategies have often been used to compare between utterances/speeches produced by EFL learners and English/American/Canadian native speakers. Most of those studies aimed at making EFL learners more aware of those distinctions so that they can use similar politeness strategies to those of native speakers. Some examples of those studies are mentioned below.

Farnia and Yazdani (2018) investigated the differences in the use of politeness strategies between Iranian EFL learners and American native speakers when they perform the speech act of reminding. They used an open-ended Discourse Completion Task to collect information. Their findings showed that native speakers were more indirect when performing such a speech act.

Furthermore, Qari (2017) compared between three different groups in their use of politeness strategies in the two speech acts of apologies and requests. The three groups were Saudi speakers using their first language, Saudi EFL learners using English, and English native speakers using English. The tool she used to gather data was a Discourse Completion Task as well. Her results demonstrated that, of all the groups, English native speakers used the highest percentage of politeness strategies. Even though Saudi EFL learners were quite

close to them in their use of politeness strategies, they utilized a narrower range of strategies than native speakers, for examples, they used only positive politeness in situations where native speakers employed all of the four politeness strategies. Furthermore, when it comes to Saudi speakers who did the test using Arabic, they used a huge number of modifiers to soften their statement, such as religious softeners and prayers.

b. The effect of the first language of EFL learners on their use of politeness strategies in English

Some academic articles focused on the possibility that the utterances produced by EFL learners in English might be affected by the pragmatics of their first language. Below are some examples of those types of studies.

Lee (2011) studied the reasons behind the differences between the politeness strategies employed by Chinese EFL learners and English native speakers. The sample of his study consisted of 73 Chinese EFL teenagers and 15 English native speakers. The instrument he employed for data collection was a two-part questionnaire. The first part of it was a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions, and its purpose was to identify the types of people that were considered of high social status for the two aforementioned groups. On the other hand, part two of the questionnaire consisted only of multiple-choice questions. Those questions listed different utterances, and required the participants to rank them in terms of their degree of politeness (e.g. less polite, polite, more polite...etc). In relation to the findings of the study, Lee (2011) first reached the conclusion that the types of people that were considered of high social status were the same for both of the aforementioned groups. He also found out that both of the groups felt the need to be extremely polite when dealing with those people of

higher social status than them, and thus employed all of the four politeness strategies when addressing them. After that, he noticed that the real difference existed in the types and amounts of the politeness strategies they used, for English native speakers appeared more polite, because they were less direct. Last but not least, he found out that the first language of Chinese EFL learners greatly affected their use of politeness strategies.

Moreover, Gharaghania, Rasekha, Dabaghia, Tohidianb (2011) conducted a similar study to that done by Lee (2011). However, their sample consisted of undergraduate Persian EFL learners and English native speakers, and the tools they used to gather data were an open-ended Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and a Dramatic Written Discourse Completion Task (DWDC). Their conclusion clearly demonstrated the fact that Persian EFL learners transferred patterns from their mother tongue to their use of English in relation to politeness strategies.

c. Identifying the specific strategies employed by EFL learners when using English

Some research papers examined the specific strategies produced by EFL learners when using English language without comparing them to the strategies of English native speakers. Some examples of those research studies are shown below.

Tabe and Warda (2018) studied the different specific politeness strategies used by Fulfulde EFL learners (learners who live in Senegal, Niger-Congo and other North-West African States) in three different speech acts: apologies, requests and greetings. They recorded a number of conversations and

used a Discourse Completion Task to gather information. Their results showed an excessive use of ‘please’ alongside some negative politeness strategies in the speech act of requests. In relation to the speech act of apology, there was a frequent use of ‘sorry’. Last but not least, the greetings produced were greatly affected by the EFL learners’ first language.

Furthermore, Karimkhanloo and Vaezi (2017) conducted a quantitative study in which they compared between intermediate and upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners in their use of politeness strategies in the speech act of request. They also examined the two groups’ use of Internal/external modifications, which is a model developed by Faerch and Kasper (1989). The instrument they used to gather data was a written DCT. Their results showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups in their use of the types of politeness strategies as well as internal and external modifications.

d. The politeness strategies used by EFL learners in educational settings

Some studies revolved around the types of politeness strategies produced by EFL learners when addressing their lecturers. For example, Wulandari (2018) studied the politeness strategies used by Indonesian EFL learners in their emails that were written to their lecturers. The participants in his study were English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students. After analysing their emails, Wulandari (2018) found out that positive politeness permeated the language used in them. He also noticed that the vast majority of the students greeted their lecturers carefully, as well as apologised for different issues based on the subject of their letters. He also reached the conclusion that about forty percent of the students used negative politeness when commenting on the suggestions of the lecturers to lessen the force

of their viewpoints. At the end of his study he clearly explained that Indonesian students perceived their professors as having an immense amount of power, and thus showing respect for them was of utmost importance.

e. The politeness strategies used in languages other than English

A plethora of studies investigated the politeness strategies used in languages other than English. Below are some instances of such studies.

Al-Sobh (2013) studied the politeness strategies used by Jordanian university students in the speech act of apology. A DCT with six different situations was created by the researcher, and distributed to the students to figure out the strategies employed. His results highlighted a number of different strategies such as offering explanations or repairs and showing responsibility and/or regret.

Furthermore, Suzila and Yusri (2012) studied the politeness strategies used by Malay adolescents in disagreement. The variables they studied were social distance, social power, and the level of formality of the issue. They distributed incomplete discourses to 49 Malay adolescents with ages ranging between 19 and 21. The participant were asked to take two versions of the same task, one in Malay and one in English. When it comes to their results, they found out that wide social distance and high social power increased the level of politeness strategies employed by the participants. However, the amount of formality impacted the degree of politeness even more, for the more formal the thing being discussed was, the more politeness strategies were used. Moreover, they also reached the conclusion that the older the adolescent was, the more politeness strategies he/she used. Further, in relation to the distinctions between the politeness strategies the

adolescents used in Malay and in English, there was not much difference between the two languages. In fact, the politeness strategies used in both of those languages were similar in type and amount.

f. Investigating politeness strategies in the speech act of disagreement in specific languages

Only a few studies examined the speech act of disagreement. Most of those studies were dealing with specific languages, such as Spanish, or Persian. Some examples of those studies are mentioned below.

Sharqawi and Anthony (2019) analysed the politeness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners in the speech act of disagreement. The concern of their study was examining the variable of gender by concentrating on the explicitness and implicitness of the strategies used. The method they used to gather information was a DCT, which was completed by 80 participants of Iraqi university students. Their results showed that both of the genders used almost the same number of explicit politeness strategies, but females employed a significantly higher amount of implicit politeness strategies than males.

Moreover, Khoirunnisa and Hardjanto (2018) studied the politeness strategies used by English native speakers in the speech act of disagreement. The participants were all university students, but were from three different nationalities, American, British, and Australian. The method they used was again a Discourse Completion Task. The results showed that the most used strategy was negative politeness followed by positive politeness. They also noticed that off record was the least used strategy, for it was hardly ever employed.

Furthermore, Bavarsad, Eslami-Rasekh, and Simin (2015) studied the difference between the politeness strategies used by female and male Iranian EFL learners in the speech act of disagreement. The two variables examined were gender and social status. The data was collected through the use of a DCT with nine different situations. When it comes to the results, they revealed that both of the genders used more politeness strategies when addressing someone with higher social power than them. However, it was found that females used a wider variety of politeness strategies than males. Also, it was concluded that even though the participants were able to write appropriate disagreements in terms of grammar and vocabulary, those disagreements were lacking social acceptability, for native speakers will not produce such disagreements. To cite an example, one of their participants wrote “My spouse and I see his future rosy with this major”. The researchers predicted that this was due to the teaching methods being insufficient or improper in Iran.

g. Comparing between the politeness strategies used by EFL learners and English native speakers in the speech act of disagreement

Only two studies that investigated the speech act of disagreement made a comparison between English native speakers and EFL learners. Some information regarding those studies is demonstrated below.

One of those studies was done by Yan (2016). He investigated the differences between the politeness strategies used by Chinese EFL learners and American native speakers in relation to the speech act of disagreement. The two variables examined were social distance and social power, and the participants within each of the aforementioned groups were undergraduate students. The

method used to gather data was a Discourse Completion Task. The results showed that Chinese EFL learners used various strategies based on degree of social power and distance of the other interlocutor. On the other hand, Americans preferred positive, followed by negative politeness when dealing with all sorts of disagreement situations. In addition, the researcher concluded that cultural differences between America and China made it hard for Chinese EFL learners to form pragmatically appropriate disagreements in English, as their disagreements sounded unnatural and even inappropriate to the situations in which they were arguing.

Furthermore, the other study was conducted by Patrawut (2014). He studied the difference in the politeness strategies used by Thai EFL learners and Canadian native speakers in multiple disagreements in class contexts. Two classrooms, one Canadian and one Thai EFL learners, were videotaped for 3 hours every week for two and a half months. Then, only multiple disagreements (the disagreements that went on for more than one turn for the students) were analysed. The results showed that both of those groups started their disagreements with bald on-record but then used different politeness strategies. The researcher also found out that the disagreements of Canadian students were longer in terms of the number of turns the students used to argue. For Example, the students talked, then gave the chance for the teacher to argue, and then they argued again, and so on for several turns. On the other hand, Thai EFL learners used fewer turns. Furthermore, it was found that the disagreements of Thai students involved less body language compared to that of the Canadian students. The researcher concluded that those phenomena were the result of English not being the mother tongue of Thai EFL learners. He predicted that they would have used more turns and more body language in their arguments if they were disagreeing in Thai.

h. What is different about the current study?

As seen above, a considerable amount of research was done on the differences between the politeness strategies used by British/American/Canadian native speakers and EFL learners of different nationalities in the speech acts of apology and request. However, the speech act of disagreement was hardly ever studied. Also, it has never been examined in relation to comparing between English native speakers and Bahraini EFL learners. Furthermore, none of the studies that revolved around the speech act of disagreement investigated all the variables (gender, social status, social distance). Taken into consideration the information illustrated above, the novelty of the current study centred around its concern with Bahraini EFL learners, as well as its focus on all of the three variables mentioned above.

5. Research problem

Disagreement is one of the most threatening speech acts of all, therefore it requires more carefulness whenever used to avoid hurting others. For EFL learners, arguing with someone in English might be even more difficult, considering that they are handling it using a language that is not their own. As a result, their disagreements might appear unnatural, or even rude. This study compared between the politeness strategies employed in disagreements produced by Bahraini EFL learners in English, and American native speakers to mark the differences between the two. This will give a clear picture of the specific inappropriate use of EFL learners when forming disagreements, and thus could be used to instruct them of how to disagree appropriately in a natural way.

6. Research objectives

The current study was conducted to investigate the differences between the politeness strategies used by Bahraini university EFL learners and American native speakers in the speech act of disagreement, with a view to examining the variables of gender, social power, and social distance. What was expected through this research work was demonstrating the differences between the politeness strategies used by the two aforementioned groups so that EFL learners have a clear picture of how their disagreements differ from native speakers, as well as how to argue in a nativelike way.

7. Research significance

This study has some important pedagogical implications. First, its results could be used to highlight the types and parts of disagreement that were often used by EFL learners, which are similar or different from those of native speakers. Consequently, EFL teachers could use this data to help the students to be aware of the common pragmatic errors they might make. Second, it gives a list of appropriate ways in forming disagreements in a native-like way elicited from the responses of American native speakers.

Moreover, this study will add new and valuable information to the research done on politeness strategies and EFL learners. The reason being is that, first, as mentioned in the justification section, this study compared between Bahraini EFL learners and American native speakers in the speech act of disagreement, something that was never done before and thus fills a gap in knowledge in this area of research. Second, its scale of investigation was wider

than most of the other studies, for it examined three different variables (gender, social power, and social distance), and not limited to one or two variables.

8. Research questions

- 7.1. What are the politeness strategies employed by Bahraini university EFL learners in realizing the speech acts of disagreement, compared with American native speakers?

This question entails the following sub-questions:

- 7.1.1. Is there a difference between the politeness strategies used by both genders in the use of speech acts of disagreement?
- 7.1.2. Is there a difference between the politeness strategies used by speakers with different social power in the realization of speech acts of disagreement?
- 7.1.3. Is there a difference between the politeness strategies used by speakers with different social distance in the realization of speech acts of disagreement?

9. The sample

The sample of this study could be broken down into two major groups: Bahraini university EFL learners and American native speakers. Each of those groups consisted of both females and males.

In relation to the group of EFL learners, it comprised 41 females and 22 males. All of them were English major students who were currently studying at the University of Bahrain. Their years of study ranged between the fourth year of study and above (e.g. fifth-year students, sixth-year students, or more). The reason for choosing participants who were within the confines of those years was that their level in the English language was expected to be advanced according to the learning outcomes of the courses specification forms. Consequently, the EFL learners that took part in this study were expected to be capable of using the English language adequately enough to communicate in comprehensible ways, and express a proper disagreement with someone in English. In fact, their use of the English language was expected to be the closest to native speakers in comparison with the other students who were below their fourth year of study.

When it comes to the group of native speakers, it consisted of 20 participants (10 females and 10 males), who were of different ages. What was needed of this group was a sample of naturally occurring/everyday use of the English language. To put it simply, this group was treated as a semi-controlled group, whose answers were considered the standard, and to which the EFL learners' answers were compared.

10. Methodology

First of all, the tool that was used to gather responses was a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The task was adopted from an academic article done by Khoirunnisa and Hardjanto (2018). However, some modifications were made by the researcher to fit the needs of this research work. Further, the task contained 12

different situations to which the participants needed to respond. Those situations were similar to open-ended questions in that they allowed the participants to write whatever they wanted. Thus, this DCT was more practical and useful than other DCTs that confine the participants to limited choices, such as a multiple choice DCT. Moreover, the task had two versions, one was made for EFL learners, and another for English native speakers. The two versions were completely identical, except for the names mentioned in them, which were nativized names that were familiar to the Bahraini culture. For example, in one of the situations there was a waitress called ‘Amal’ in the version of EFL learners, and ‘Antonia’ in the version of native speakers. The reason for having different names in each version was because native speakers might not be familiar with Arabic names and their gender, thus those names were replaced with English ones instead. Furthermore, the validity of the task was assessed by two English Language professors of the Master program at the University of Bahrain. Also, its reliability was confirmed through a small pilot study in which three Bahraini EFL learners and two American native speakers took part.

Second, when it comes to the nature of the methodology of this study, it was both qualitative and quantitative. It was qualitative because it described and explained the different types of politeness strategies used by the participants. On the other hand, its quantitative side stemmed from the fact that the number of the different politeness strategies employed was counted and compared between the different groups.

Last but not least, the steps that were taken in the methodology were as follows. First, the Discourse Completion Task was distributed to Bahraini EFL learners and American native speakers. Second, the responses by both of the aforementioned groups were analysed to highlight the different types of politeness

strategies employed in them. Third, gender differences, social distance, and social power were examined in the comparison between the two aforementioned groups. Fourth, the number of each politeness strategy used by every group, along with the specific methods employed within that strategy, was counted, and then converted into percentages. Fifth, the percentages of each politeness strategy and its techniques were compared in relation to the different groups. The results were then interpreted based on diagrams and tables showing the distinctions between the groups in their use of politeness strategies.

11. Research terminology

- **Discourse Completion Task (DCT):** a written questionnaire that consists of a number of various situations. The participant is required to imagine being in those situations, responding to them as such.
- **Native speakers:** American native speakers.
- **EFL learners:** Bahraini EFL learners who were currently studying in the English Language and Literature Department at the University of Bahrain.
- **Politeness strategies:** the four politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1978).
- **Sub strategies/ methods/ techniques:** the techniques within positive and negative politeness, such as hedging or complimenting.
- **Positive politeness:** “means communication/ community, solidarity, familiarity, symmetry/ balance/ the horizontal feature of communication.” (Hobjilă, 2012, p.215)

- **Negative politeness:** “means respect, the distance speaker –interlocutor, the avoidance of suppositions connected to the interlocutor, impersonalization, avoidance behaviour or that of redressing a difficult situation etc.” (Hobjilă, 2012, p.215)
- **Bald on-record:** “Doing the face threatening act (FTA)...without any redressive action.” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.60)
- **Off record:** Not doing the face threatening act (FTA). (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.60)

12. Research delimitations

One of the biggest delimitations of this research paper was that the number of participants in each group of EFL learners was not equal– there were over 40 females, and only 22 males. The results would have been more comprehensive if their numbers were equal. The researcher was not able to do anything to fix this problem, as it resulted from the University of Bahrain having generally more female students than males. However, the data compared in the findings section was in the form of percentages. Thus, the effect of the difference in number was reduced to the minimum.

When it comes to the two groups of native speakers, it was not a problem to have less participants in them than EFL learners. This was because their purpose was just to have a sample of how the English language is used naturally in everyday life to form disagreements.

13. Results and analysis

In this section, the results that were found after data analysis, as well as their implications, are presented in detail. The section is divided into three major parts. The first part is further broken down into 12 separate subsections, each deals with the results of one of the 12 situations of the DCT, along with their obvious interpretations. The second part compares between the results of all of the situations, and goes deeper to find logical reasons for the similarities and differences between them. The third part answers the questions of this research study.

Furthermore, despite the fact that all of the situations were required to be answered, not all the participants responded to all the situations. Some of them refrained from disagreeing in particular situations saying things like ‘I won’t disagree with him. It’s none of my business.’ Table ‘1’ below shows the number of responses to each situation.

Table (1): The Percentage of Participants Who Responded to Each Situation

Situation Number	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
1	96%	100%	100%	100%
2	100%	100%	100%	100%
3	98%	100%	100%	100%
4	100%	100%	100%	100%
5	98%	100%	100%	100%
6	100%	100%	100%	100%
7	95%	90%	100%	100%
8	86%	95%	100%	100%
9	100%	100%	100%	100%
10	100%	100%	100%	100%
11	100%	100%	100%	100%
12	86%	82%	100%	100%

As seen in the table above all of the participants who did not answer some of the situations belonged to the group of EFL learners.

Part A: the results of the twelve situations and their interpretations

In this section the results of each of the twelve situations are shown in detail.

Situation 1: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has the Same Social Power

First, regarding the content of the first situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “You are shopping for shoes for a very important ceremony with your two close cousins who are of the same age as you (Ahmed and Sami). Ahmed has chosen a pair of shoes that you think looks worn out, and does not suit him. However, Sami says to him ‘You really need to buy them! They look cool on you!’. You want to disagree with both of them, so you say:”.

Second, in relation to the participants’ willingness to disagree with a close male that has the same social power as them, all of them responded to the situation, except for a few female EFL learners (see table ‘1’). They wrote things like ‘I don’t share opinion maybe.’ This might be due to cultural beliefs and ideologies, for in the Bahraini culture, no matter how close your cousin of the opposite gender is, she/he is still a stranger whom you can get married to. Thus, respect is necessary when talking to her/him. As a result, not sharing opinion is the best way to prevent offending him/her. Chart ‘1’ below shows the percentages of

the politeness strategies used by all of the groups when disagreeing with the aforementioned type of person.

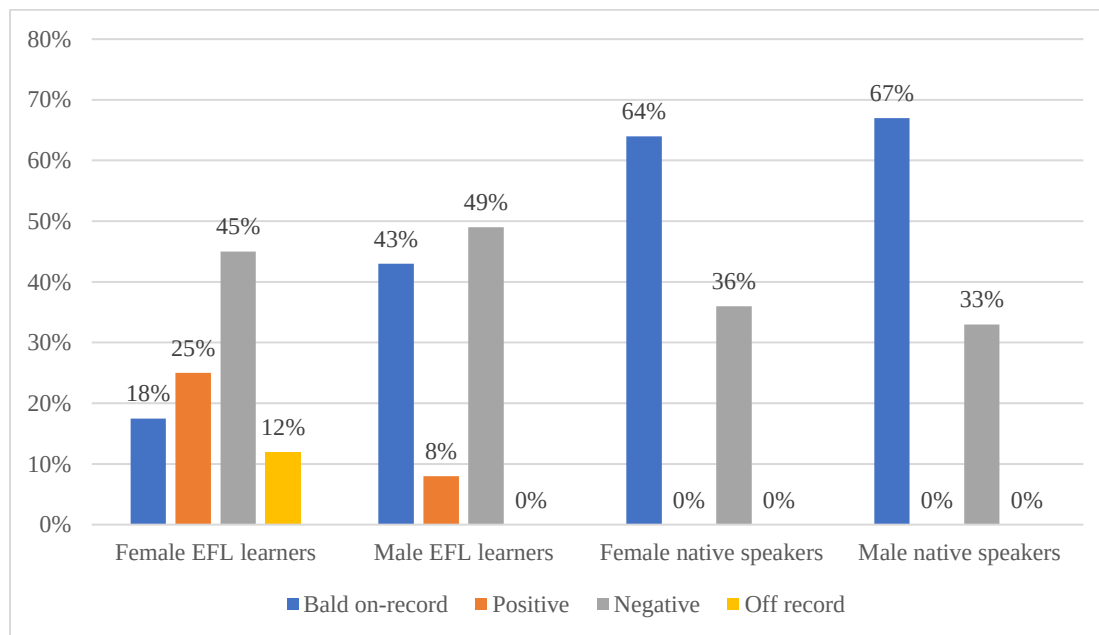


Chart 1: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has the Same Social Power as the Participants

Third, as seen in chart ‘1’, bald on-record and negative politeness were the most frequently used methods by most of the groups. An example of bald on-record is “*They are ugly...*”. Further, an instance of negative politeness is “*...I think they look bad...*”. Aside from the examples, both of the groups of native speakers used a higher percentage of bald on-record (over 60%) than negative politeness. However, the groups of EFL learners used a lower percentage of bald on-record (less than/ 45%), especially the female group, for it employed the lowest percentage of bald on-record (18%), and thus was the least direct amongst the four groups. It was also the only group that employed off-record politeness. That fact

reinforces the conclusion mentioned above about cultural rules and ideologies, for Bahraini females must treat their cousins with a bit of formality, as they are considered strangers. As a matter of fact, not only females, but both of the EFL learners' groups can be deemed more polite than native speakers, because they used quite a higher number of negative politeness (over 40%) and a lower number of bald on-record (under 45%) than them. Moreover, they were the only two groups that applied positive politeness. Other examples of off record and bald on-record are shown below.

➤ **Examples of off record as used by female EFL learners**

1. *They are not suitable for the ceremony.* Let's try something else. (talking about suitability rather than appearance)
2. While you think these shoes look cool, *it will not be appropriate to wear them at the ceremony.* You need to pick something more formal, otherwise, you will look out of place. (talking about suitability rather than appearance)

➤ **Examples of bald on-record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

They look so bad on you let's see other model.

❖ **Male EFL learners**

They look awful. Believe me. Lets go some place else.

❖ **Female native speakers**

I know we don't see eye to eye on this, but *the shoes are just awful, they are worn and don't suit you at all. Let's try another shop.*

❖ **Male native speakers**

It looks worn. Don't buy it.

Table '2' below shows the negative politeness sub strategies for the four groups.

Table (2): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Male Who Has the Same Social Power as The Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	46%	42%	54%	63%
Hedging	19%	28%	46%	37%
Giving reasons	12%	30%	-	-
Asking questions	8%	-	-	-
Highlighting the right to have a personal opinion	15%	-	-	-

Fourth, as shown in table '2' above the individual methods used on the spectrum of negative politeness were expressing a personal opinion,

highlighting the fact that each individual has the right to have a personal opinion, asking questions, giving reasons, and hedging. Furthermore, while EFL learners used a variety of those methods, the techniques native speakers employed were only expressing a personal opinion and hedging. This further supports the idea that EFL learners are more polite. Moreover, expressing opinion was the most frequently employed technique by all the groups (over 40% of all of the negative politeness techniques). More examples of negative politeness are shown below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. No, *I don't think you* should buy them they look very worn out. Let's look around more we *might* find something better. (expressing a personal opinion and hedging)
2. To be honest, *I think* they look worn out. You need something elegant, because *lots of people will be there*. (expressing a personal opinion and giving reasons)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. To be honest with you, *from POV I think* you should whatever makes you feel comfortable although *I don't think* it suits you but it's your choice not mine. (expressing a personal opinion)
3. They look worn out. Let's go to another shop. We *might* some pair better. (hedging)

❖ **Female natives**

1. They look old-fashioned *to me*. Let's look somewhere else.
(expressing a personal opinion)
2. *I think* they look just awful. (expressing a personal opinion)

❖ **Male natives**

1. They look worn, man. Don't buy them. Keep looking, you *might* find better ones. (hedging)
2. You must be kidding, let's look somewhere else, we *might* find something better. (hedging)

Fifth, concerning the specific techniques the two groups of EFL learners used within the area of positive politeness, they were giving hope and/or encouragement, involving the hearer in the activity and complimenting. The latter method was only employed by female EFL learners.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *It looks cool* but I think there's a better pair somewhere, *lets* keep looking alright? (complimenting and involving the hearer in the activity)
2. I know you like them, but if I'm being honest, I don't think they are suitable/ appropriate for the event, *but don't worry, I'm sure we will find a better pair!* (giving encouragement and hope and involving the hearer in the activity)

❖ Male EFL learners

1. I did not like them, *but don't think about it too much, you will find a better shoes somewhere. !* (giving encouragement and hope)
2. They look old-fashioned. *I am sure we will find something more suitable in another shop. Don't worry. !* (giving encouragement and hope)

Situation 2: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has the Same Social Power

First, in relation to the content of the second situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “Your close cousin Nada, whose age is the same as you, criticizes a specific movie saying that ‘Its events are illogical and the acting is so bad.’ You happened to love that movie, so you want to disagree with her, thus you say:”.

Second, when it comes to the participants’ eagerness to oppose a close female that has the same social power as them, all of the them answered the situation as illustrated in table ‘1’. This means that disagreeing with the earlier described type of female is not much of a problem, rather it can be deemed quite normal to the participants. Chart ‘2’ below shows the different politeness strategies used by four groups.

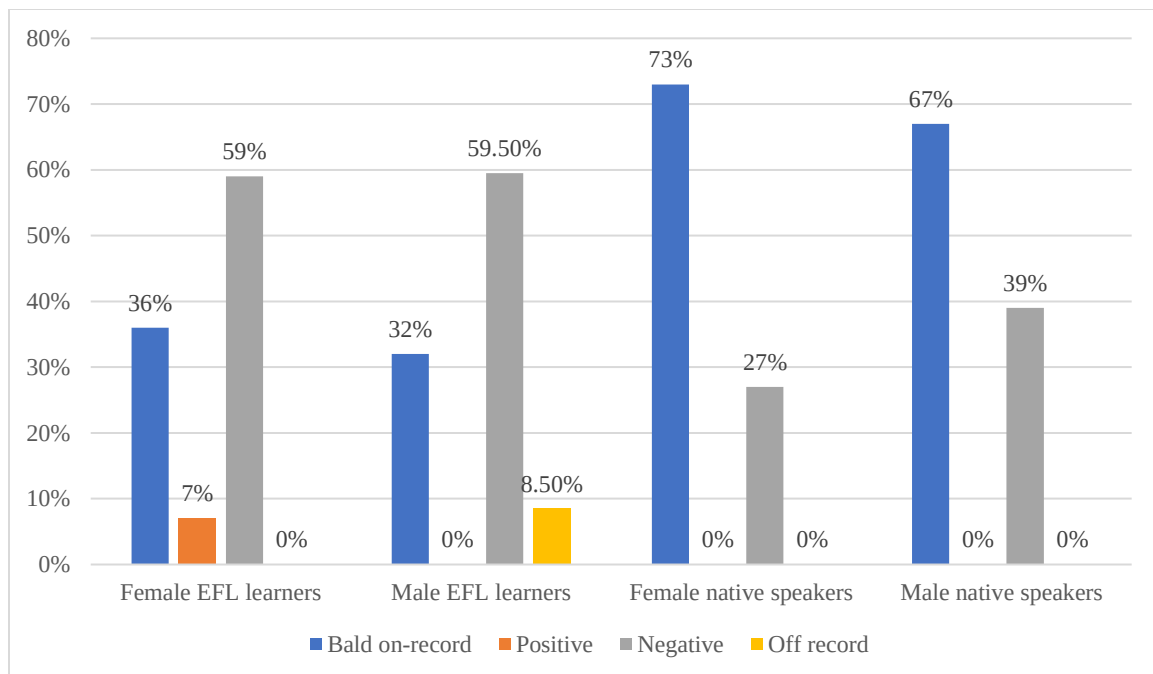


Chart 2: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has the Same Social Power as the Participants

Third, regarding the most commonly used strategies in disagreeing with a close female that has the same social power as the participants, they were again both bald on-record and negative politeness, as seen in chart ‘2’. An example of the former is “*Don’t say that...*”, and an instance of the latter is “*I think...*”. Further, native speakers were more direct than EFL learners in articulating their disagreements in general, especially females, for they used more bald on-record (over 65%) and less negative politeness (under 40%) than the latter group. This demonstrates that EFL learners feel the need to be more polite when dealing with the aforementioned type of female in comparison to native speakers. Other examples of bald on-record as used by four groups are listed below.

➤ **Examples of bald on-record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

Nooooo it's not.

❖ **Male EFL learners**

I disagree with you, it's actually a wonderful movie.

❖ **Female natives**

Seriously, if you don't like the movie just leave. It's my favourite movie and has my favourite actor. Don't spoil it for me.

❖ **Male natives**

No... the acting is wonderful and the events are more than logical.

Fourth, with regards to the specific methods of negative politeness used by the participants, they are illustrated in table '3' below.

Table (3): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Female Who Has the Same Social Power as the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	31%	38%	57%	38%
Highlighting the right to have opinion	28%	31%	-	8%
Hedging	24%	19%	10%	11%
Giving reasons	10%	-	-	-
Asking questions	7%	12%	33%	43%

As seen in table ‘3’, all of the groups focused a great deal on informing the other interlocutor (the close female) that they are just expressing their own personal opinion (around 30%). Further, around the same percentage of the earlier mentioned method, both of the EFL groups utilized the technique of announcing that every person has the right to have his/her own unique opinion on any matter. They also used a variety of hedging devices to reduce the power of their disagreements (around 22%). On the other hand, native speakers, especially females, did not just use less percentages (under 40%) of negative politeness in general, as demonstrated in chart ‘2’ above, but they also hardly ever used hedging devices (around 10%), settling for asking questions as a second technique to reduce the force of their disagreements (around 37%). This supports the idea that EFL learners were more polite than native speakers. Other examples of negative politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. I really liked the movie. *I don't think* it was that bad. The acting was really good *maybe it's just not your cup of tea*. (Expressing a personal opinion, hedging, and being conventionally indirect)

2. I disagree. I really liked the movie. *It seems* that *our tastes are different*. (Hedging and minimizing the imposition)

❖ **Male EFL Learners**

1. I totally disagree with *you because the cast are incredibly professional at acting and you can see that from the fighting scenes that they present.... everyone has his own opinion*_but I disagree with yours. (Giving reasons and acknowledging that everyone has his/her own opinion)

2. *I don't think so*, it's amazing *from my POV*. (Hedging and expressing a personal opinion)

❖ **Female natives**

1. *Why do you say that?* For your information, it's the best movie I've ever watched. (Using questions)

2. *I think* there is something wrong with you. Everybody just loves it. (expressing a personal opinion)

❖ **Male natives**

1. *I think* your exaggerating. It wasn't *that* bad. (expressing opinion and hedging)
2. I don't know why you I think so, but *in my opinion*, it's one of the greatest movies ever made. (expressing opinion)

Fifth, in relation to the off-record strategy, only male EFL learners used it, and in a rather low percentage (8.5%). A few examples of it are shown below. However, just the fact that it has ever been employed gives a clear picture of the excessive amount of cautiousness and carefulness they were willing to adhere to when articulating their disagreements. This is very likely the result of them disagreeing with a person of the opposite gender.

➤ **Examples of off-record politeness as used by male EFL learners**

1. For me, *I kinda like the general atmosphere of movie*, it gives me a sense of hope. (talking only about the atmosphere)
2. *What about the dialogue? I find it* very entertaining and believable. (talking only about the dialogue)

Sixth, only female EFL learners used positive politeness. Some examples of it are shown below. It was also applied in a low percentage (7%). But employing it clearly illustrates how polite female EFL learners try to be even when disagreeing with a person of their same gender and social power. Also, adding this fact to the point mentioned above about male EFL learners using the off-record strategy results in emphasizing the idea that EFL learners are more polite than native speakers when opposing a close female of their same social power.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness used by female EFL learners**

1. *I respect your opinion*, yet I disagree with you. It is my favorite movie.
(being pessimistic)
2. *Im sorry you didnt like it* but i actually enjoyed it. (sympathy)

Situation 3: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has More Social Power

First, with regards to the content of the third situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “You are in a car with your mother. You know the way very well, and the fact that you have to turn left at the next intersection, but your mother says: ‘I am turning right. It might be a shortcut’. You want to disagree with her, so you say:”.

Second, regarding the participants’ readiness to argue with a close female that has more social power than them, they all responded to the situation appropriately, except for one female EFL learner. She responded to the situation through agreement instead of disagreement with the aforementioned person. She reasoned that ‘...there is no point in arguing with mom’. This is not strange given that she is addressing her mom, a female whom she has known since the day she was born. Chart ‘3’ below shows the percentages of the politeness strategies used in situation ‘3’.

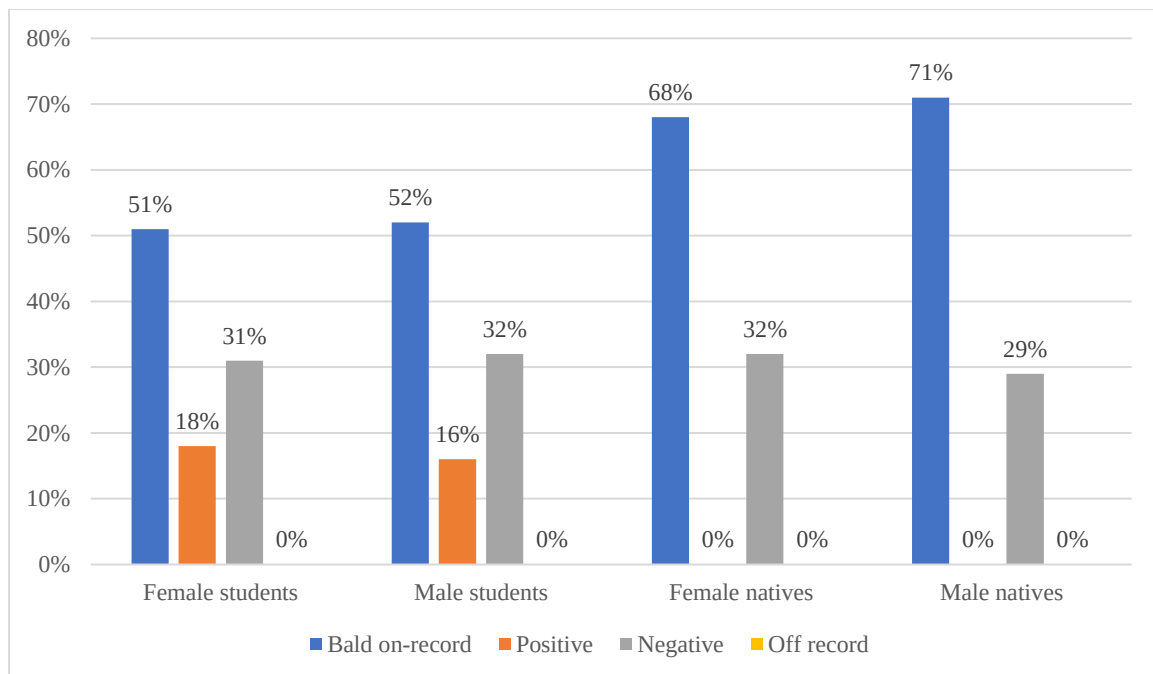


Chart 3: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has More Social Power than the Participants

Third, as seen in chart ‘3’ above, bald on-record and negative politeness were the most commonly applied strategies by all of the groups in disagreeing with their mothers. An instance of bald on record is “*Don’t go this way mom...*”. Also, an example of negative politeness is “*...we may get lost ...*”. Further, all of them used a higher percentage of bald on-record (over 50%) than negative politeness (under 35%). However, when divided into two sets of groups, the groups of EFL learners used a smaller number of bald on-record (under 55%). This means that EFL learners were more genteel than native speakers. Other examples of bald on-record are mentioned below.

➤ **Examples of bald on-record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

Going right would throw you off your lane, I know the way so let me guide you!.. take the next left at the next intersection.

❖ **Male EFL learners**

No, take the left side at the next intersection.

❖ **Female natives**

Mum, I won't go that way. It's not a short cut as I went that way yesterday and it added another 30mins to the journey.

❖ **Male natives**

I know the way. That's not a shortcut. You should go left.

Fourth, when it comes to the specific methods of the negative politeness employed, they are shown in table '4' below.

Table (4): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Female Who Has More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	15%	10%	-	-
Hedging	39%	18%	14%	10%
Giving reasons	23%	72%	73%	90%
Asking questions	23%	-	-	-

As illustrated in table ‘4’ above, native speakers mainly reduced the power of their disagreements through giving reasons (over 70%). They also used a few hedging devices (less than 15%). However, EFL learners, especially females, used a wider variety of techniques. This clearly illustrates the amount of effort they put in to be polite when delivering their disagreements. Some more examples of negative politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *I think* we should go left mom. (expressing opinion)
2. We *might* get lost if we go right. We should go to the left at the next intersection. (hedging)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *Are you sure mom? I think it's to the left.* (Asking questions and expressing a personal opinion)
2. *I know the way, so let me guide you. Turn left.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Female natives**

1. No mom, *I know the way.* You should turn left not right. (giving reasons)
2. You *might* get lost if you go right. You should go left. (hedging)

❖ **Male natives**

1. Mom, that's not a short cut, *I know the way.* Go left. (giving reasons)
2. *I know the way really well.* Just turn left. (giving reasons)

Fifth, only the two groups of EFL learners employed positive politeness in this situation, and they did that in quite a substantial amount (over 15%). An example of it is “Come on *please* mom...”. Table ‘5’ below shows the sub methods they employed and their percentages.

Table (5): The Specific Methods of Positive Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Female Who Has More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners
Showing comradery	83%	25%
Saying please	17%	75%

As portrayed in table ‘5’ above, the particular methods they applied within the sphere of the aforementioned strategy were showing comradery through the use of the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’, and saying ‘please’. This is extra evidence that they were more polite than native speakers. A few more examples of positive politeness are illustrated below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. Mom, *please* go left, if you go right *our* precious time will be wasted.
(saying please and showing reflexivity and claim cooperation)
2. What if *we* get lost? I know the way. It’s to the left at the next intersection. (Claim co-operators reflexivity and include both the speaker and the hearer)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. No, you should take the left road at the next intersection, mom.
Otherwise, *we* will get lost. (showing reflexivity and claim cooperation)
2. Mom, *please*, it’s not the time to be fooling around. Take the left turn.
(saying please)

Sixth, off record politeness was never employed by any of the four groups.

Situation 4: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has More Social Power

First, with regards to the content of the fourth situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “You have got bad scores on a number of your mid-term tests. Your father says to you: ‘I’m taking away your PlayStation, phone, and iPad for a whole month. You should focus only on your studies instead of wasting your time on such toys’. You disagree with his decision so you say:”.

Second, in relation to the participants’ willingness to challenge the orders and decisions of a close male that has more social power than them, all the participants responded to the situation. This is not surprising considering that they were arguing with their father, someone who might be the closest male figure in their lives. Chart ‘4’ below portrays the different politeness methods used by the four groups in situation ‘4’.

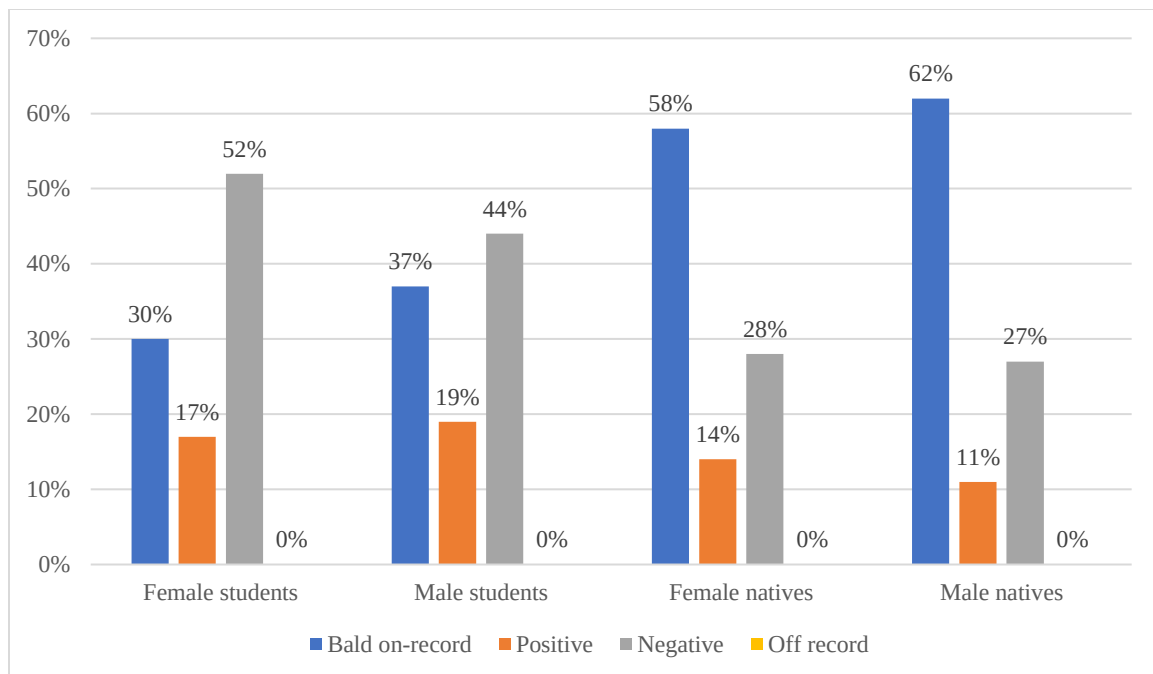


Chart 4: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has More Social Power than the Participants

Third, as seen in chart ‘4’ above, the most commonly applied strategies by all of the groups in arguing with their father were negative politeness and bald on-record. An example of the first strategy is “...*I need them while studying...*”, and an example of the second strategy is “*You can’t do that...*”. Further, EFL learners used more negative politeness (over 40%) and less bald on-record (under 40%) than native speakers. This means that they were more careful with how they worded their disagreements. Furthermore, when comparing between female and male EFL learners, females appear to be slightly more polite, for they used quite a larger number of negative politeness (52%), which amounted to more than half of the sum of the strategies they employed. They also applied a smaller

number of bald on-record (30%). Some more instances of bald on-record are shown below.

➤ **Examples of bald on-record:**

❖ **Female EFL learners:**

I studied really well, I didn't even use them during my exam period. It's not fair for you to take them away. I tried my best and that was the result.

❖ **Male EFL learners:**

Me not having a good understanding of my subjects have nothing to do with how i spend my time using my phone etc.

❖ **Female native speakers:**

You can't be serious. I'm not a baby anymore dad.

❖ **Male native speakers:**

I'm old enough to handle my own issues. So, please dad, don't interfere with my studies.

Fourth, table '6' below portrays the individual methods used within the circle of negative politeness, which were expressing opinion, hedging, giving reasons, asking questions and being apologetic.

Table (6): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Male Who Has More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	9%	16%	25%	29%
Hedging	6%	8%	-	-
Giving reasons	73%	71%	75%	71%
Asking questions	6%	5%	-	-
Being apologetic	6%	-	-	-

As seen in table ‘6’ above, the most frequently used method by all of the groups was giving reasons, which was applied in similar percentages (over 70%). The second most common method was expressing a personal opinion. Further, EFL learners applied more distinct methods in their use of negative politeness than native speakers, as the latter applied only the two aforementioned methods. Also, being apologetic was only used by EFL learners. Based on the data mentioned above, EFL learners were more polite than native speakers. A few more examples of negative politeness are cited below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *But some of these devices help me a lot in my studies and make my life so much easier.* (giving reasons)

2. *Taking my entertainment devices will only stress me out and doesn't help with me focusing on studies and doesn't guarantee any improvement in my grades.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. I understand your concern, but you cant take all of them, *I need some of them to attend lectures online.* (giving reasons)
2. *How am I suppose to study and attend lectures if you take all the devices?* (asking questions and giving reasons)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *If you take away my ipad i won't be able to do my homework.* You can take away the others but leave the ipad. (giving reasons)
2. *I need them to study dad, you cant take them.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. Come on dad, *I think I can manage my life on my own.* I'm not a baby anymore. (expressing a personal opinion)
2. Nonsense, *considering that we are living in the age of the Corona virus I already need them to study, or at least to attend lectures.* (giving reasons)

Fifth, table '7' below exhibits the various sub strategies of positive politeness used by the different groups in situation '4'. To cite one example of it, "...No no *please* dad...".

Table (7): The Specific Methods of Positive Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Male Who Has More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Saying please	50%	41%	85%	70%
Highlighting respect	17%	24%	-	-
Showing understanding	33%	35%	-	30%
Being thankful and appreciative	-	-	15%	-

As seen in table ‘7’ above, positive politeness was the least used strategy by all of the groups (under 20%). Moreover, EFL learners used a slightly higher percentage of it (over 15%) than native speakers. This might be seen as a further confirmation that EFL learners were more polite. Also, concerning the individual methods used under the umbrella of positive politeness, they were saying ‘please’, highlighting respect, showing understanding, and being thankful and appreciative. Furthermore, native speakers used only two methods of positive politeness. EFL learners, on the other hand, used three, which further supports the claim of them being more polite. More examples of positive politeness are shown below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

Dad *I understand* where your coming from by depriving me of these luxuries but u can't take them for a whole month maybe Ill settle with

two weeks instead if you may *please*. (saying please and showing understanding)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

I understand your POV, but I really need the devices dad, you cant take all of them at once. (showing understanding)

❖ **Female native speakers**

I appreciate all your effort to support me. but that just won't work, as I truly need the devices, or else I can't attend any classes.
(highlighting appreciation)

❖ **Male native speakers**

I'm old enough to handle my own issues. So, *please* dad, don't interfere with my studies. (saying please)

Sixth, no instances of off-record politeness were found.

Situation 5: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has Less Social Power

First, concerning the content of the fifth situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “Your mother grounded your little sister, who is in her middle school,

for failing in an exam. You hear your little sister say ‘I hate my mother; she doesn’t love me’. You want to disagree with her so you say:”.

Second, in relation to the participants’ readiness to disagree with a close female that has less social power than them, all the participants responded to the situation, except for one female EFL learner. She responded by saying “Yeah she probably does”. The way her response was structured gives the impression she was not exactly agreeing with the aforementioned type of female, but only playing around with her. This is not unusual, given that she was talking to her little sister. Chart ‘5’ below displays the politeness strategies utilized within situation ‘5’.

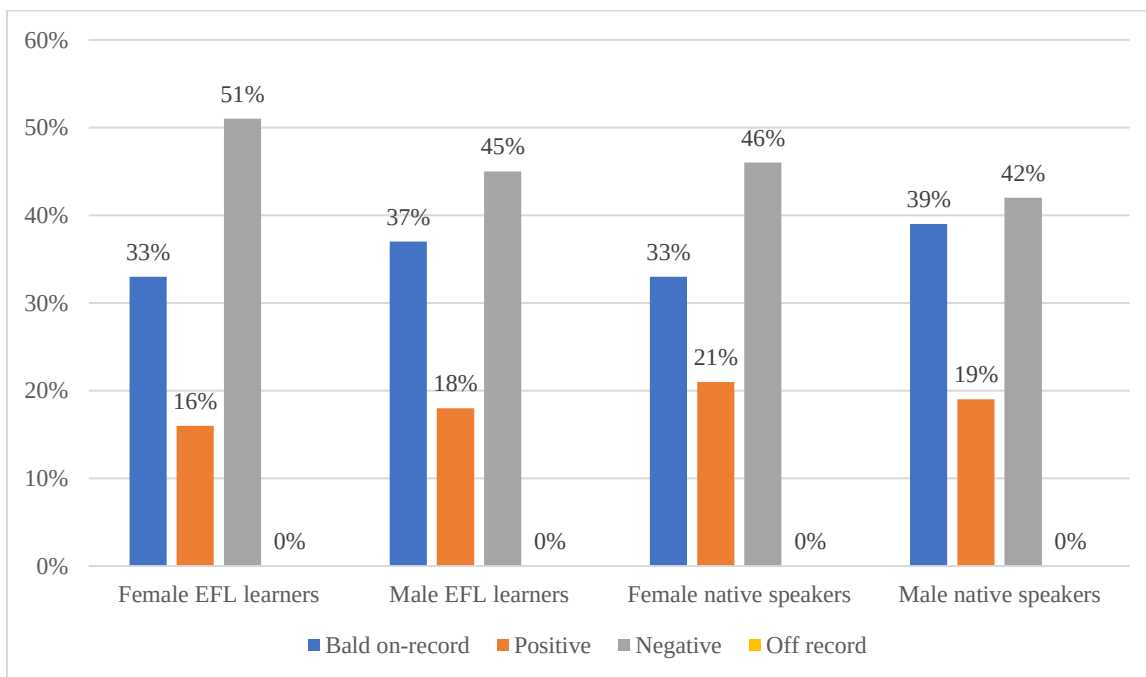


Chart 5: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has Less Social Power than the Participants

Third, as portrayed in chart ‘5’ negative politeness was the most frequently used strategy by all of the different groups, followed by bald on-record. One example of negative politeness is “*She did that because she wants you to succeed in the future...*”. Also, an instance of bald on-record is “*Don’t you ever say that again you silly...*”. Further, when comparing the four groups, it is quite obvious that the percentages of their usage of those two strategies were rather close, as all of the groups used around forty-five percent of negative politeness and around thirty-five percent of bald on-record, but there were still some slight differences. For instance, one conspicuous difference is that female EFL learners employed the largest percentage of negative politeness (51%), which was more than half of the strategies they used. However, given that they utilized the lowest percentage of positive politeness (16%), they cannot be considered the politest amongst the groups. More examples of bald on-record are illustrated below.

➤ **Examples of bald on-record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

No No No No you never say that to your mother, she's doing that because she loves you and want what's best for you sis.....

❖ **Male EFL learners**

That’s not the right thing to say. You should always be grateful for all the effort that comes from mommy....

❖ **Female native speakers**

Stop being such a cry baby. You’re old enough to realize that punishments are there to teach you a lesson...

❖ Male native speakers

Of course she loves you, and that's exactly why she is punishing you.

She is concerned.....

Fourth, when it comes to the specific methods all of the groups applied within negative politeness, they were only two: hedging and giving reasons. Table '8' below reveals the percentages of the aforementioned sub strategies.

Table (8): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Female Who Has Less Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Hedging	3%	-	26%	22%
Giving reasons	97%	100%	74%	78%

As manifested in table '8' above, hedging was more widely used by native speakers (over 20%). As for EFL learners, only females applied that technique, and in an insignificant amount (3%). This means that EFL learners use of negative politeness was almost exclusive to giving reasons (more than 95%). This might mean that EFL learners do not try to be extra polite when disagreeing with a younger close female, but they try their best to make her understand why they are arguing with her in the first place. A few more examples of negative politeness are shown below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. “Don’t say that; my mom did that *because she care about you and love you*” (giving reasons)
2. No dear, don’t say that, it’s not that mommy hates you, but *she wants you to succeed....*(giving reasons)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. No, you don’t love yourself *because you don’t work hard to improve yourself but mom is trying to help you realize that.* (giving reasons)
2. She’s only punishing you *so that you do better next time*, which means she loves you. (giving reasons)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. No, of course she loves you, otherwise, she wouldn’t even bother to punish you *so that you learn from your mistakes.* (giving reasons)
2. You don't really mean that. she does love you. *she is only teaching you a lesson that it is important for you to study hard for your exams.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. It *might* feel bitter now, but in the future, you’ll be grateful for what mom is doing. (hedging)
2. Don’t be silly. Mom loves you. *She just want you to get better results to secure your future.* (giving reasons)

Fifth, with regards to the particular methods used under the umbrella of positive politeness, they were highlighting comradery, stressing common experience, showing understanding, and complimenting. To give one example of this strategy, “*I know how you feel...*”. Table ‘9’ below shows the percentages of those methods.

Table (9): The specific methods of positive politeness used when disagreeing with a close female who has less social power than the participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Highlighting common experience	44%	70%	62%	87%
Showing understanding	22%	22%	38%	13%
Complimenting	12%	8%	-	-
Highlighting comradery	22%	-	-	-

As portrayed in table ‘9’, the most frequently used one by the four groups was highlighting common experience (over 40%). Using that method, the participants talked about facing the same punishment as the interlocutor sometime in the past. Also, that method was often supported by phrases that announced some understanding of the other interlocutor’s feelings and thoughts, which was the second most used method. Further, complimenting was only employed by EFL learners (around 10%). Last but not least, female EFL learners were the only group to use the method of highlighting comradery, and they employed a significant amount of it (22%) through the use of pronouns such as ‘our’ or ‘us’. Having said that, it might seem like female EFL learners were the politest. However, given that

they used the lowest percentage of positive politeness (16%), as mentioned above, positions them in a rather undetermined area. More examples of positive politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. I know how you feel, *dear sister*. But remember that mom did that because she loves you and care the most about your future.
(complimenting)
2. Don't say that. *Our mother* did this for your own good. She is concerned about you and wants you to have a bright future that is why she punished you. She wants you to pay more attention to your studies. *Our mother* is the (highlighting comradery)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. Mummy wants the best for you. She's penalizing you in order to teach you a lesson so that you do better. *She has done the same for me*. (Highlighting common experience)
2. *I was punished a lot too when I was a child*. But I did not say bad thing about my mother. Mama wants you to do better than you did which exactly is why she punished you. If you want her to give you a gift instead of punishment, do better. (Highlighting common experience)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *I know how you feel, no one likes to be punished.* But you are punished to learn a lesson, and do better. So, you should be thanking mom instead of blaming her. (showing understanding)
2. *I was grounded too, a lot.* But I didn't cry or got bitter, I knew mom wanted me to do better next time. (Highlighting common experience)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *I got grounded a lot when I was your age. I also angry about it,* but now I understand that mom did it for my sake. Because she cares about me and my future. (Highlighting common experience)
2. Come on, you know that's not true. *I got grounded too,* but I didn't cry. I just tried my best to get better results and I did. You need to do the same. (Highlighting common experience)

Sixth, none of the participants applied the off-record strategy in this situation.

Situation 6: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has Less Social Power than the Participants

First, regarding to the content of the sixth situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “Your little brother, who is in his middle school, says to you ‘I’ll leave school and start a YouTube channel. I’ll work so hard on it to make it famous. This way I can earn a lot of money and become a millionaire.’ You want to disagree with him so you say:”.

Second, as for the participants' willingness to disagree with a close male who has less social power than them, they all responded to the situation. The different politeness strategies they used are manifested in chart '6' below.

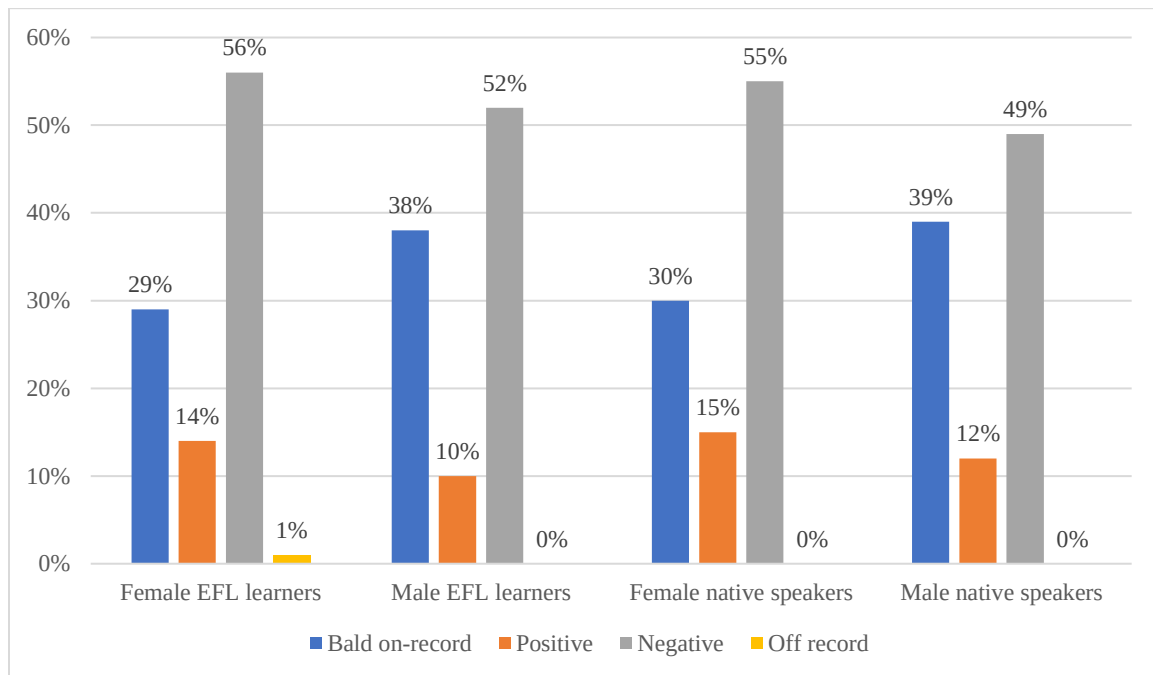


Chart 6: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has Less Social Power than the Participants

Third, based on the results shown in chart '6', negative politeness was the most used strategy by all of the four groups when opposing their little brother's decision. To cite an example of it, "...*what if you don't get enough followers? ...*". Moreover, bald on-record comes second in terms of the highest applied strategies. An instance of it is "*Don't even think of leaving school...*". Further, all of the four groups used extremely close percentages of those two strategies, for they applied around thirty percent of bald on-record, and around fifty percent of negative

politeness. However, both of the male groups used a slightly higher percentage of bald on-record (over 35%), which means that they were a bit more direct than the females' group, and therefore less polite. More examples of bald on-record are listed below.

➤ **Examples of bald on-record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *Do what you want but never leave school*
2. *If you can pull that off.. I'd be your biggest supporter, however, if you fail to do so...you have to finish school and put YouTube as a hobby not a carrier.*

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *Never even consider doing that, unless you want to live in regretfulness.*
2. *Don't leave school, it's were you grow to become an appropriate person in society today.*

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *It's good to see that you have a plan for the future. But don't abandon your education. Think of it as a plan B.*
2. *No, of course you're abandoning your education. Mom will never allow that. education is the most important thing nowadays.*

❖ Male native speakers

1. What?! *You must be kidding*. Working only as a youtuber will not give you enough money to live a normal life. But your education will.
2. *Your education is way more important egghead*. Besides, YouTube does not pay much.

Fourth, when it comes to the specific methods employed on the spectrum of negative politeness, they were giving reasons, asking questions, expressing one's personal opinion and hedging, as seen in table '10' below.

Table (10): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Male Who Has Less Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	-	7%	13%	11%
Hedging	6%	5%	26%	27%
Giving reasons	80%	77%	34%	38%
Asking questions	14%	11%	27%	24%

As revealed in table '10', the most common sub strategy of negative politeness used was giving reasons (over 30%). Moreover, both of the EFL learners' groups depended on that method excessively, for it made up more than seventy-five percent of the total of the techniques they each used. Further, most of the reasons mentioned by all of the different groups revolved around why knowledge is more important than fame on YouTube and money. Last but not least, native speakers used way more questions (over 20%) and hedging (over

25%) than the EFL learners. Consequently, they might be considered more polite in their construction of this strategy. Some more examples of negative politeness as used by the four groups are illustrated below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. Your education is the most important thing in life. *Money and fame come and go but your education stays forever.* You can follow your dream after you finish school. (giving reasons)
2. *I don't think that* taking this risk would assure you having a career (expressing a personal opinion)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. A lot of people before you thought about that but *it's not a fixed income and you're still young to think like that you have a lot of things to learn before thinking like this little brother* but if you grow up and still wanted to open a YouTube channel trust me I'll be your first supporter. (giving reasons)
2. *Fame on YouTube is not steady. You might lose everything in the blink of an eye.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Female natives**

1. *What makes you think that you can succeed on YouTube?* You may think it's rather simple, *but it's harder than it looks.* (asking questions, hedging, giving reasons)

2. *Who gave you this idea? Quitting school to become a youtuber? You can't be serious.* (asking questions)

❖ **Male natives**

1. *Why don't you do both at the same time? This will be a good way of filling your time with productive activities.* (asking questions and giving reasons)
2. *Graduating with a degree will give you a job that is not just stable, but also pays more.* (giving reasons)

Fifth, positive politeness was used by all of the groups, in rather close and modest percentages (around 15%). An instance of this strategy is “*I love how inspired you look but...*”. The particular methods employed within that strategy are illustrated in table ‘11’ below.

Table (11): The Specific Methods of Positive Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Close Male Who Has Less Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Showing understanding	20%	39%	45%	38%
Complimenting	50%	22%	20%	14%
Giving hope and encouragement	30%	39%	35%	48%

As seen in table '11' the techniques of positive politeness used in situation '6' were showing understanding, complimenting, and giving hope and encouragements. Further, complimenting was used more by EFL learners (over 20%), especially female EFL learners (50%), than native speakers (20% and below), this means that they can be considered more polite in the way they applied this strategy. A few more examples of positive politeness are shown below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *Nowadays that is a good career choice, I love that you have aspirations*, but you can still study and pursue it in your free time as a hobby, it takes a lot of time to grow a following and be successful, so why not plan forward and do both? (Giving hope and encouragement, and complimenting)
2. *Sweetie* you have to finish school your education is important. You can still start a YouTube channel though and if it blows up then that's a good thing but quitting school is not an option. (complimenting)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. Let me show you *dear brother* the percentage of the people that said that and actually succeeded, but at the end this will make you famous-if u succeed- for the current time and not for the future and you can lose everything any second. Therefore, start your youtube chanel while you're in school and *that way you'll be mutli-tasking and will earn more* (Giving hope and encouragement, and complimenting)

2. *I see you have good future thinking. That's impressive. But your education is way way way more important. You cant just leave school. But you can do both at once. Thins way you will be killing two birds with one stone.* (Giving hope and encouragement, and complimenting)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *It's good to see that you're planning ahead.* But leaving school will deprive you from countless opportunities in the future. I think it will be best to do both at the same time. (complimenting)
2. *A youtuber? impressive.* But you'll look even more impressive if you become a youtuber with a degree in something. (complimenting)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *A youtuber! good future thinking.* But people are not going to respect you if you're not educated. (giving hope and encouragement, and complimenting)
2. *I kinda get why you want to be a youtuber.* But most people don't subscribe to the channels of uneducated people. So, don't abandon school. (showing understanding)

Sixth, in relation to the off-record strategy, only female EFL learners used it in an extremely low percentage (1%). An example of it is illustrated below.

➤ **Examples of off record as used by female EFL learners**

Sure, but promise me this. Everyday for the next three months, i want you to give me a new idea that would keep me excited for the next day. (hinting that it is impossible to do that task)

Situation 7: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has the Same Social Power as the Participants

First, in relation to the content of the seventh situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “You are sitting next to a girl in the first day of orientation on campus. You have never met her before. However, she suddenly says to you: ‘I’ve no idea why my parents sent me here again, I would rather work and make some money. Going to the university is not just useless, but a waste of money too.’ You want to disagree with what she said, so you say:”.

Second, concerning the participants’ willingness to disagree with a distant female with the same social power as them, a few female and male EFL learners refrained from arguing with that type of female. Their reasons for not disagreeing with her were things like “I would not disagree agree with her, every person has his own opinion and priorities. Maybe she knows that she would not be able to succeed in university so she wants to work instead.” This is expected considering that they are dealing with a stranger. However, no native speakers refrained from stating their disagreements. This might indicate that native speakers are more open to have an argument with a person they are meeting for the first time. Chart ‘7’ below exhibits the different politeness strategies that were employed in situation ‘7’

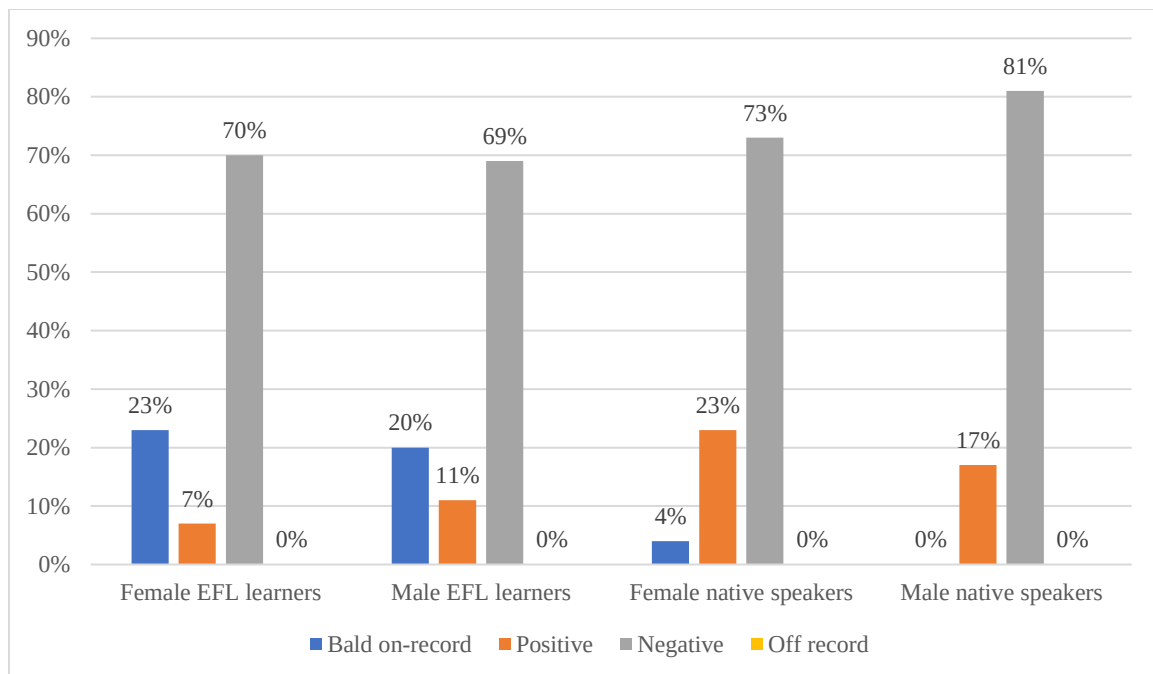


Chart 7: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has the Same Social Power as the Participants

Third, as demonstrated in chart ‘7’ above, negative politeness was the most used strategy by all of the different groups when disagreeing with a distant female that has the same social power as them. To give an instance of that strategy “...having a degree in a certain field will give you a high chance of getting a dream job, a job that a lot of people are dying to get...”. Further, even though the utilization percentages of that strategy were so close for the four groups (around 70%), male native speakers applied it in a slightly higher percentage than the rest (81%). Furthermore, regarding the specific methods that were employed under the negative politeness umbrella, they were giving reasons, being apologetic, expressing personal opinions, hedging and asking questions, as demonstrated in table ‘12’ below.

Table (12): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who Has the Same Social Power as The Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	3%	7%	18%	21%
Hedging	3%	5%	24%	27%
Giving reasons	85%	83%	32%	21%
Asking questions	3%	5%	26%	31%
Being apologetic	9%	-	-	-

As shown in table ‘12’ above, giving reasons was the most recurring technique for EFL learners (over 80%). As for native speakers, they used more hedging (around 25%), expressing opinion (around 20%) and asking questions (over 25%) than EFL learners. This means that the latter group was less polite than the former in terms of the methods they employed within the aforementioned strategy. More examples of the use of negative politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. You should be thankful for having the opportunity that many people don’t. *Having university education could help you get a better job and it will definitely improve your skills.* You *might* not think of it from this perspective, but it’s true. (giving reasons and hedging)

2. Your parents are paying for your education *to give you a more stable life and a higher chance of getting a well paid job. I'm sorry* but you should appreciate it. (being apologetic and giving reasons)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. Taking your education prior to working will benefit you much more as education will *open your eyes to things more*. Moreover, *education is key to EVERYTHING no matter what*(giving reasons)
2. *Having a certificate will allow you to gain better jobs*. (giving reasons)

❖ **Female natives**

1. You *may* think of it as a waste of time now but look at it as a challenge. You will have an amazing time. (hedging)
2. I know how you feel, but being educated *means having a higher chance of getting a 'good' job in the future*. So, let's endure the pain together. Haha. (giving reasons)

❖ **Male Natives**

1. Yeah, it always looks hard and sometimes even pointless at the beginning. *But as they say 'no pain no gain'*. (giving reasons)
2. I'd try to be more positive if I were you, *it's already hard enough, and thinking like that will make it even worse*. (giving reasons)

Fourth, regarding the second most frequently used strategy, it was different for the two sets of groups (the groups of EFL learners, and those of native speakers). Both female and male EFL learners used more bald on-record (around 20%) than the two groups of native speakers (under 5%). An example of it is “*don’t think like old, uneducated people do...*”. By contrast, the latter groups used more positive politeness (around 20%) than the former (around 10%). An instance of this strategy is “*I get what you mean but...*”. Also, native speakers used a wider range of positive politeness techniques than the aforementioned group as seen in table ‘13’ below. This further enforces the idea that EFL learners were less polite than native speakers when delivering their disagreements to a distant female with their same social power.

Table (13): The Specific Methods of Positive Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who Has the Same Social Power as The Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Showing understanding	60%	100%	38%	24%
Giving hope and encouragement	40%	-	22%	62%
Adding a sense of humour	-	-	23%	-
Highlighting comradery	-	-	17%	14%

As displayed in table ‘13’ above, the most used technique for the majority of the groups was showing understanding, for the EFL learners’ groups used over fifty-five percent of it, and female native speakers employed thirty-eight percent of it. In fact, male EFL learners depended exclusively on that particular

method. On the other hand, male native speakers used giving hope and encouragement as the main strategy (over 60%) when employing positive politeness. A few more examples of bald on-record and positive politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of bald on record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

Your words can be correct if you are smart enough to know that the university only adds to your information

❖ **Male EFL learners**

Taking your education prior to working will benefit you much more as education will open your eyes to things more. Moreover, education is key to EVERYTHING no matter what

❖ **Female natives**

Don't think like that. You'll make your time even worse. Think of the job you'll have in the future and all the money it will bring you.

❖ **Male natives**

Think of all the people you're going to meet at collage, most of them will be your age and will have a lot in common with you. Such an experience is priceless. Believe me.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *I know how you feel.* But education is really important. You'll have a better job if you are educated. (showing understanding)
2. Your parent send you here because they worry for your future. Having a degree will give you a better job in the future. So don't leave here and *good luck.* (giving encouragement)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *I understand where you are coming from.* Education is hard. But it will benefit you the most. It actually will give you better choices of jobs. (showing understanding)
2. *I see your point,* but having a degree will make you eligible to a wider array of jobs and occupations. (showing understanding)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *I understand why you may think that way,* but I'm sure your parents want you to have a good future, *give it a chance and do your best.* (showing understanding and giving hope and encouragement)
2. *I know how you feel,* but being educated means having a higher chance of getting a 'good' job in the future. So, *let's endure the pain together. Haha.* (showing understanding, adding a sense of humour and comradery)

❖ Male Natives

1. *I get what you mean*, but when you get your degree you'll have the chance to get a better job. (showing understanding)
2. *I know*, but we need to have degrees to have better jobs. (showing understanding and comradery)

Fifth, no instances of off-record politeness were found.

Situation 8: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has the Same Social Power as You

First, in relation to the content of the eighth situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “It is the beginning of a new semester. A new classmate of yours, whom you have never seen before, talks about a doctor you know very well and respect so much. The classmate says ‘that doctor seems to be so rigid, I bet he’ll make this course a living hell.’ You want to disagree with him so you say:”.

Second, concerning the participants’ eagerness to oppose a distant male with the same social power as them, a few male EFL learners along with a considerable number of female EFL learners refused to argue with the aforementioned kind of male. Their justifications for such a refusal were things like ‘I don't say anything. It's not my business’. This is understandable given that they have never met that person before. This further supports the earlier mentioned conclusion, which is that native speakers have more readiness to disagree with strangers. Chart ‘8’ below displays the politeness strategies that were employed by the participants in situation ‘8’ along with their percentages.

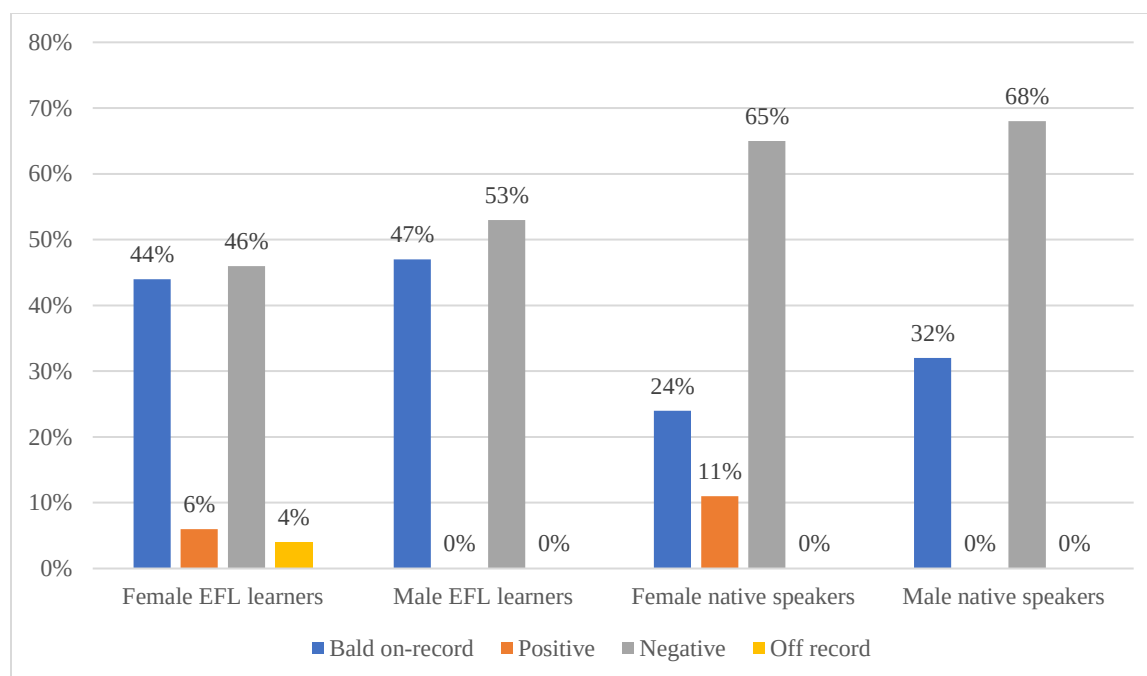


Chart 8: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has the Same Social Power as the Participants

Third, as shown in chart ‘8’ above, negative politeness was the highest employed strategy by all of the four groups when disagreeing with a distant male that has the same social power as them. To cite one example of it, “...*I took some classes with him before and he is super helpful...*”. However, the two groups of native speakers used a larger percentage of negative politeness (around 67%) than the EFL learners’ groups. Actually, the latter set of groups utilized almost the same percentages of negative politeness and bald on-record (around 45%). This implies that native speakers were more genteel than EFL learners when addressing the earlier mentioned type of male. To have an instance of bald on-record, “*No he is not...*”. Further, when comparing the two groups of EFL learners, it can be said that females were slightly more polite than males. The reason for that is, unlike

males, females used a few positive and off-record politeness techniques (around 5% of each).

Fourth, the specific methods used under negative politeness were giving reasons, expressing a personal opinion, hedging, and asking questions (look at table ‘14’ below).

Table (14): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who Has the Same Social Power as The Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing personal opinions	3%	-	16%	13%
Hedging	11%	13%	18%	15%
Giving reasons	74%	69%	47%	50%
Asking questions	13%	18%	19%	22%

As manifested in table ‘14’ above, EFL learners focused on the technique of giving reasons (around 70%). They also used a fair amount of asking questions (around 15%) and hedging (around 10%). But when it comes to expressing a personal opinion, only females used it and in a low percentage (3%). In relation to native speakers, they used a huge amount of giving reasons (around 50%), and they also had a larger share of the other three methods than EFL learners (around 15% of expressing personal opinions, around 16% of hedging, and around 20% of asking questions). This fact reinforces the conclusion mentioned

above about native speakers being more respectful towards a male they met for the first time. A few more examples of negative politeness and bald on-record are shown below.

➤ **Examples of bald on-record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

No at all I disagree with you he is very good dr and you will love him.

❖ **Male EFL learners**

This doctor happens to be my favourite doctor, and I bet he will be your favourite doctor too at the end of the semester.

❖ **Female native speakers**

Well, I took course with him last semester and he was really good. In fact, I'm fond of his way of teaching.

❖ **Male native speakers**

Come on he is a good doctor, almost everyone here likes him.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. I took a few classes with him he's super nice and fun. *why would you just assume that about someone?* (asking a question)

2. Be positive, he *might* just not. At the end, the doctor appreciates students' hardwork and participation, so if you do your work *i dont think you should worry about anything*. (hedging and giving a personal opinion).

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *I wonder why some students dislike the best doctor in our department?* (asking a question)
2. Oh! I'm not sure why you *may* think that but *I've met this doctor before and I've attended his classes*, he is the complete opposite of your impression of him; he's helpful and respectable. (hedging and giving reasons).

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. He *might* look rigid on the outside, but he's very flexible on the inside. I took a few classes with him before. He's really considerate and helpful.
2. *Why do you think that? does he come off as a strict person?* Well, he taught me before, and he was super nice. (asking questions)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *Does he really look rigid?* Because, he's definitely not. He's the best doctor you could ever have at this collage. Trust me on that. (asking questions)
2. *He taught me before*, he *might* look strict times, but he is a really good doctor. (giving reasons and hedging)

Fifth, in relation to positive politeness, only the two female groups applied it, and in small percentages (around 8%). The methods they chose to use were all related to highlighting common experience. Some examples of that method are shown below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *A lot of people say that at the beginning. I was scared of him too. But now he is my favourite doctor ever...* (showing common experience)
2. *My thoughts were similar to yours the first day he taught me, but now he is the best doctor for me.* (showing common experience)

❖ **Female natives**

1. *That's what I thought to begin with, but once you get involved with the class you will see a different side to him.* (showing common experience)
2. *I felt that way too when I first saw him. But let me tell you he's not. He's the complete opposite of that.* (showing common experience)

Sixth, when it comes to off-record politeness, only female EFL learners used this method and in a very small percentage (4%). However, the idea that it has been used might mean that EFL learners attempted to be a little bit more considerate and tactful when addressing a distant male with a social power similar to theirs.

➤ **Examples of off record politeness used by EFL learners**

1. *He will only live up to your expectations if you believe so.* (not directly announcing to the other but you disagree with him, but rather taking the position of the advisor)
2. *Stop being a drama queen, I bet it is your problem ...* (instead of directly saying don't judge the doctor, the speaker put the spotlight on the person he disagrees with and acts as if he is trying to help him out)

Situation 9: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has the Less Social Power than the Participants

First, with regards to the content of the ninth situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “You are sitting in a restaurant. The waitress comes to you and says ‘Good evening. I am Amal, and I will be your waitress tonight. For the special menu of this week, we are offering mushroom cream soup. I recommend you to try it. It’s so delicious.’ However, you want to refuse her offer, so you say:”.

Second, regarding the participants’ readiness to disagree with a distant female with less power than them, they all responded to the situation. In fact, in a situation like the one mentioned above not responding in either agreement or disagreement will be considered rude and will make the interaction a little bit awkward. Thus, the fact that all of the participant responded makes a lot of sense. The particular politeness strategies used by the participants in situation ‘9’, as well as their percentages, are uncovered in chart ‘9’ below.

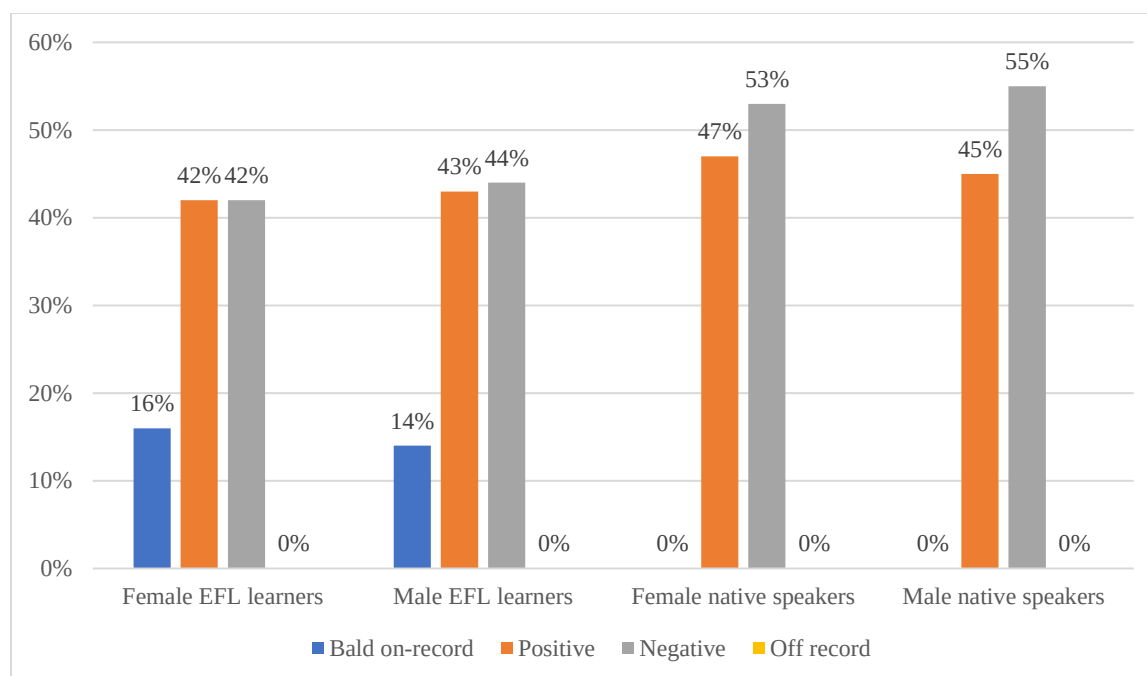


Chart 9: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has less Social Power than the Participants

Third, as shown in chart ‘9’ above, negative and positive politeness were the most used strategies by all of the groups. In fact, native speakers depended exclusively on those two strategies in their disagreements. An example of negative politeness is “...*I’m allergic to mushrooms*”, and an example of positive politeness is “*Thank you but...*”. Further, all of the groups used similar percentages of those strategies (around 45% of positive politeness, and around 48% of negative politeness). Actually, one of the groups, female EFL learners, had exactly the same percentage in both of them (42%). However, negative politeness was still employed slightly more than positive politeness in relation to the other three groups. Also, native speakers used a little bit more negative politeness (more

than 50%) than EFL learners (around 43%). This means that the former were more polite than the latter.

Fourth, in relation to the percentages of the specific methods employed under the negative politeness strategy, they as shown in table ‘15’ were giving reasons, asking questions, being apologetic, expressing a personal opinion, and hedging.

Table (15): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who Has Less Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	4%	7%	-	-
Hedging	22%	28%	-	-
Giving reasons	57%	65%	58%	61%
Asking questions	9%	-	42%	39%
Being apologetic	9%	-	-	-

As revealed in table ‘15’, giving reasons was the most used method by all of the different groups (around 60%). Moreover, expressing opinion, hedging and being apologetic were only used by EFL learners. The last method was only employed by female EFL learners. More examples of negative politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. No thank you, sorry, but *I don't like mushrooms. What else do you guys have?* (being apologetic, giving reasons, and asking questions)
2. Thank you but *I'm allergic to mushroom.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. Thanks but *I'm not in the mood for mushrooms, I think I'll have a dish of fish and chips instead.* (giving reasons, and expressing opinion)
2. Thanks a lot for trying to help, *but I came to this restaurant to try it's pasta, they say it's the most delicious pasta in the world.* Maybe next time I'll order the mushroom soup. (giving reasons)

❖ **Female natives**

1. Thank you for your recommendation but *I'm allergic to mushrooms.* (giving reasons)
2. Thank you but *I don't eat mushrooms.* (giving reasons)

❖ **Male natives**

1. Thank you, *but I don't eat mushrooms, for some health issues. What else do you recommend?* (giving reasons, and asking questions)
2. Thank you, *but I don't like mushrooms.* (giving reasons)

Fifth, as shown in table '16' below the specific methods used within the positive politeness spectrum were being thankful and appreciative, complimenting, using honorifics, greeting, and highlighting comradery.

Table (16): The Specific Methods of Positive Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who Has Less Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Being thankful and appreciative	61%	65%	77%	85%
Complimenting	22%	10%	-	-
Using honorifics	4%	6%	-	-
Greeting	9%	11%	15%	12%
Highlighting comradery	4%	-	-	-

As uncovered in table ‘16’, the most used method by all the groups was being thankful (over 60%). Furthermore, complementing was only employed by EFL learners. This means that they were trying to be as polite as they could. More examples of positive politeness as used by the four groups of participants are listed below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *That sounds lovely but maybe another time since im not really craving mushroom soups tonight thank you very much.*
(Complimenting and being thankful and appreciative)
2. *Hello, good evening Amal. I bet it tastes good but I'm not in the mood for soup right now. Im kinda hungry so i want a big meal.*

Maybe some other time. What would you recommend for that?
(greeting and complimenting)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *Im really delighted for your recommendation* but I was thinking of taking another dish that was in my mind but *thanks for your recommendation Im very thankful for it* maybe next time Ill order it. (Being thankful and appreciative)
2. *I'm really grateful for you recommendation.* But, I came all the way here to test your spaghetti. I might order mushroom soup some other time. (Being thankful and appreciative)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *Thank you,* what else do you recommend? (Then I might order that thing instead). (Being thankful and appreciative)
2. *Thank you for the recommendation.* Do you have roasted salmon? (Being thankful and appreciative)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *Thank you,* but I don't drink soup. (Being thankful and appreciative)
2. *Thank you* for your recommendation but mushrooms are not good for my health. (Being thankful and appreciative)

Sixth, regarding the strategy of bald on-record only EFL learners used it, and in quite small percentages (around 15%). Some examples of it are demonstrated below.

➤ **Examples of bald on record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

Thank you Amal, it sound extremely good, but maybe next time. *Today I'd like to have a pizza*

❖ **Male EFL learners**

Thank you so much for the offer, it sounds so delicious, I will definitely order it next time, but *I will be ordering chicken soup instead*. I love chicken soup.

Seventh, none of the four groups employed off-record politeness in their disagreements when arguing with a distant female with less social power than them.

Situation 10: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has Less Social Power than the Participants

First, as far as the content of the tenth situation of the DCT is concerned, it was as follows: “You have taken one of your Jackets to the laundry. You go to take it, but you notice that one of its sleeves is burned a bit. When you inform the man working there, he says ‘I think it was already burned when you

brought it here’. You are sure this is not true, thus you want to disagree with him, so you say:”.

Second, regarding the participants’ willingness to be against a distant male with less power than them, they all gave a response to the situation. Taking into account that the thing they were arguing about is a poor customer service they have received, and that cost them one of their possessions, it is not surprising that they all responded. Chart ‘10’ below displays the politeness strategies utilized in situation ‘10’ and their percentages.

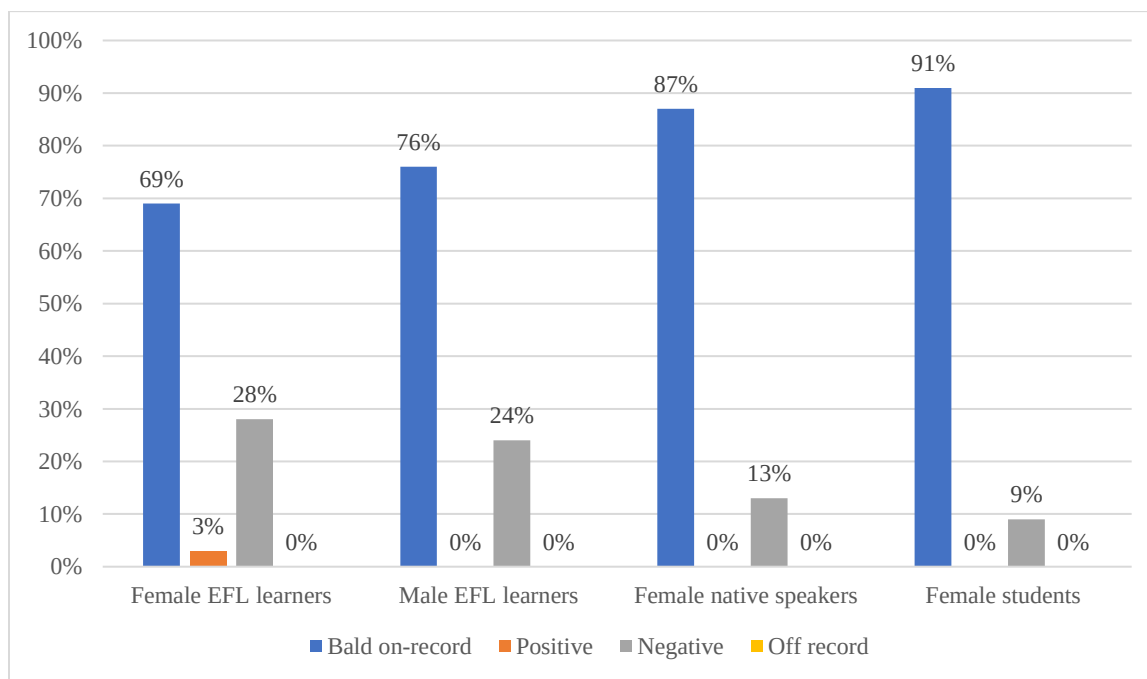


Chart 10: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has Less Social Power than the Participants

Third, as portrayed in chart ‘10’, bald on-record was the most used strategy by all of the groups when opposing a distant male who has less power than them. However, the two groups of EFL learners employed a slightly lower

percentage of this strategy (under 80%) than native speakers (around 90%). To cite one example of it, “*No, I’m sure it was not...*”. They also utilized a larger percentage of negative politeness (around 25%) than native speakers (under 15%). To give an instance of it, “*I have just bought it...*”. This means that they were more genteel with how they delivered their disagreements than native speakers. Some more examples of bald on-record are illustrated below.

➤ **Examples of bald on record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *No no I am sure it was like this when I brought him here, I won't come to this laundry again*
2. *I am sure that it was not in this state when I brought it.*

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *Im sure that it wasn't but okay I'll just wash my laundry in some place else.*
2. *I'm sure it wasn't. can I speak to your boss?*

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *I can assure you that it was not burnt when I brought it in.*
2. *Well, it was not. I want to speak to the owner of this laundry right away.*

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *It was not, okay. Now, I'd like to have a refund or else.*
2. *No, it wasn't. what evidence to you have to support your claim?*

Fourth, the techniques of negative politeness applied by all of the different groups were giving reasons, apologizing, expressing a personal opinion and hedging (see table ‘17’ below).

Table (17): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who Has Less Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing opinion	27%	24%	-	-
Hedging	11%	33%	-	-
Giving reasons	44%	53%	60%	78%
Being apologetic	18%	-	-	-
Asking questions	-	-	30%	22%

As shown in table ‘17’, giving reasons was the primary way for all the groups to lessen the power of their disagreements (over 40%). However, EFL learners used a larger number of various techniques than native speakers, who utilized only giving reasons and asking questions. This might further support the idea that EFL learners are more polite when addressing a distant male with less social power than them. More examples of negative politeness are demonstrated below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. This isn't true. *I brought it to the laundry because it was in a perfect shape.* Otherwise, *why would I bring a burnt jacket to the laundry.* I don't remember it having any burn. (giving reasons and asking questions)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *Do you have an evidence to back up your saying?* (asking questions)
2. I'm 100% positive I never burned it I dropped it off here and it was in tip top shape. You should take responsibility for your mistakes. *Maybe* you can fix it or give a refund. (hedging)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. No, I can assure you it wasn't. *it's brand new.* (giving reasons)
2. I assure you it wasn't. *May I talk to our manager?* (asking questions)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *What makes you think that? Do you have evidence?* If you don't, then I'd like my money back. And you're going to pay for the burnt jacket too. (asking questions)
2. *How could it be burnt when I bought it right before I brought it here?* (giving reasons and asking questions at the same time)

Fifth, only female EFL learners employed positive politeness, and in an extremely small percentage (3%). The only method they utilized under that strategy was showing understanding. Some examples of the positive politeness they employed are shown below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness as used by female EFL learners**

1. I am confident it was not burned before I brought it to you. I am not blaming you because *I know mistakes happen*. I just want you to acknowledge your mistake. (showing understanding)
2. I was not burnt at all. *I know it is difficult to iron clothes*, but you should be more careful next time. Also, I want a refund (showing understanding)

Sixth, none of the groups employed the strategy of off record in their disagreements when dealing with a distant male with less social power than them.

Situation 11: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has More Social Power than the Participants

First, concerning the content of the eleventh situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “You submitted a very important paper, on which you worked so hard, to your doctor, Rami, during Monday class. Today is Thursday. The doctor returns the paper to all of your classmates except you. After that, he comes to your desk, looks at you, and says: ‘I’m sorry, you didn’t submit anything, so I gave you an F.’ You want to disagree with what he has said so you say:”.

Second, as for the readiness to disagree with a distant male with more social power, all the participants responded to the situation. This is expected as they were arguing about something that could cause them to repeat a whole course again. The politeness strategies used within situation ‘11’ and their percentages are demonstrated in Chart ‘11’ below.

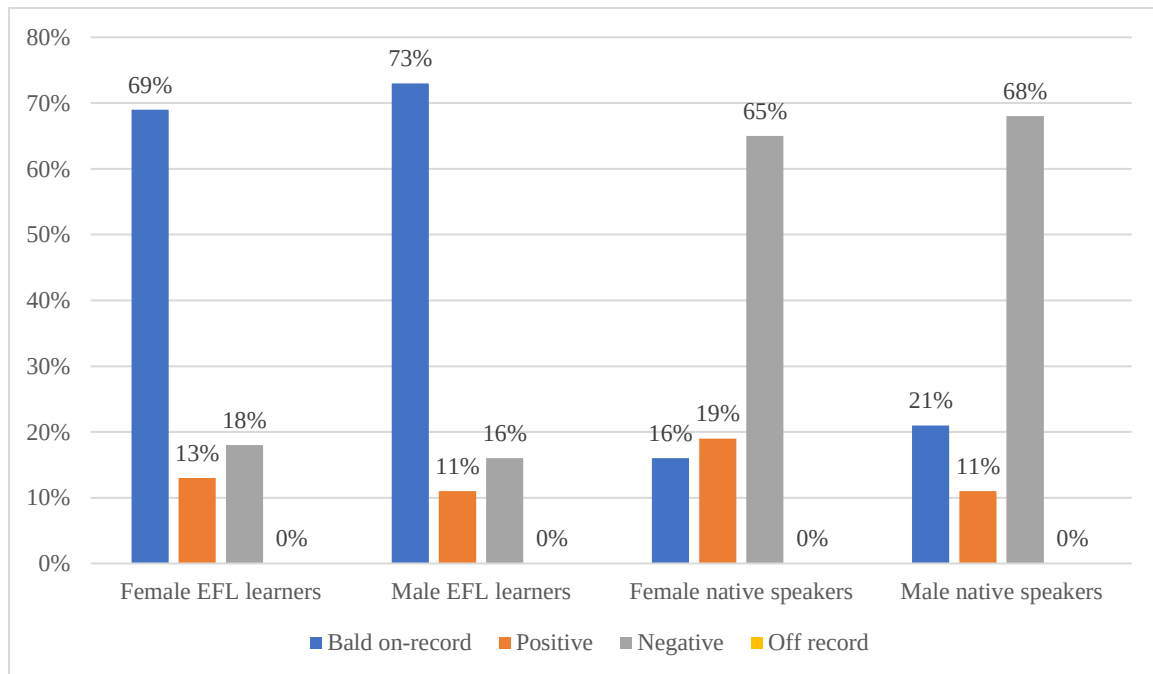


Chart 11: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has More Social Power than the Participants

Third, regarding the most common strategy employed by the four groups, there were clear distinctions between the two groups of EFL learners and those of native speakers, as seen in chart ‘11’ above. While female and male EFL learners used over sixty percent of bald on-record and under thirty percent of negative politeness, female and male native speakers used over sixty-five percent

of negative politeness and under twenty-five percent of bald on-record. An example of bald on-record is “*No doctor, I know I submitted it...*”, and an example of negative politeness is “...you *might* have lost it somehow...”. Further, when it comes to the specific methods the four groups used within the negative politeness strategy, they were giving reasons, hedging, and being apologetic (see table ‘18’).

Table (18): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who Has More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Hedging	67%	71%	82%	79%
Giving reasons	28%	29%	18%	21%
Being apologetic	5%	-	-	-

As stated in table ‘18’ above, there was an intense utilization of hedging by all of the four groups (over 65%). Also, giving reasons was the second most used method (around 25%). In fact, it was the only other method employed by all of the groups, except for female EFL learners, who used a third method, which was being apologetic. A few more examples of negative politeness and bald on-record are given below.

➤ **Examples of bald on record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *I'm sure there is a mistake. I have submitted my paper on Monday. Maybe it got lost or something. I can prove it.*

2. *There must be something wrong. I assure you sir that I have submitted my papers at the deadline. If you would like me to resend you another copy, I can send you from my email right away.*

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *Doctor I submitted the paper to you I swear can check for it if you may because I worked on it for three days and my classmates can confirm that.*
2. *I did submit my paper. It was lost maybe. I can send you another copy right now.*

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *I gave you the paper on Monday just after class. You put into your briefcase as you were leaving class. so I don't accept the fail.*
2. *I did give to it you. My friend was standing next to me when I did so. You can ask her yourself.*

❖ **Male native speakers:**

1. *But I submitted it with everyone else. You might have placed it somewhere else.*
2. *I submitted the paper doctor. I swear. You can't just give me an F.*

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *Please doctor, I am sure I gave it to you. Please, you cant give me an F, I worked so hard on it. (giving reasons)*

2. I did submit my paper on monday and *I worked so hard on it* I will not accept an F. You must have misplaced it somewhere I hope you can have another look at your papers it *might* be there. (giving reasons and hedging)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. I submitted my paper. You *might* have put it with the papers of another class. (hedging)
2. *Could you please look for it*, I am sure I have submitted it. You *might* have put it somewhere in your office. (asking questions and hedging)

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. I'm certain I gave it to you the same day the others did. You *might* have placed it somewhere by mistake. *Could you please look for it?* (asking questions and hedging)
2. No doctor, that's impossible. I 100% sure I gave it to you. It *might* have got mixed up with the papers of another class. *Will you please accept another copy of it?* (asking questions and hedging)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. But I submitted my paper. It *might* have got misplaced somewhere. Please, *could check the papers of the other classes you teach?* you *might* find it. (asking questions and hedging)
2. But I did submit it. You can ask John (one of my classmate). *Could you please check the papers you have again?* If you couldn't find it, I can send you another copy. (asking questions)

Fourth, when it comes to positive politeness, all of the groups had close percentages of that strategy (under 20%). The particular methods they employed were saying ‘please’, and showing appreciation and thankfulness. Further, the latter method was only employed by EFL learners. Some examples of positive politeness are listed below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. *Please please* doctor, I’m sure I submitted it. You might lost it. Ask my friends. *Please* search for it. (saying please)
2. I am sure I submitted it doctor. *Please* check the papers you have in your office. It might be there. (saying please)

❖ **Male EFL learners:**

1. I am sure I gave it to you just like everyone else. *Please* check the papers you have again. I’m sure it’s there. *I will be thankful* if you could search for it. (saying please and being thankful and appreciative)
2. No, I have submitted it on time. Ask the other students and they will tell you the truth. *Please* search for it. (saying please)

❖ **Female native speakers:**

1. I’m certain I gave it to you the same day the others did. You might have placed it somewhere by mistake. Could you *please* look for it? (saying please)

2. No doctor, that's impossible. I 100% sure I gave it to you. It might have got mixed up with the papers of another class. Will you *please* accept another copy of it? (saying please)

❖ **Male native speakers:**

1. But I submitted my paper. It might have got misplaced somewhere. *Please*, could check the papers of the other classes you teach? you might find it. (saying please)
2. But I did submit it. You can ask John (one of my classmate). Could you *please* check the papers you have again? If you couldn't find it, I can send you another copy. (saying please)

Fifth, with regards to the off-record strategy, none of the participants employed it.

Situation 12: Disagreeing with a distant female who has more social power than the participants

First, with respect to the content of the twelfth situation of the DCT, it was as follows: “Your English doctor, Wafaa, says that ‘Socrates wrote lots of important books’. But you know for a fact that Socrates did not write any book. You want to disagree with her, so you say:”.

Second, pertaining to the participants' willingness to disagree with a distant female with more social power than them, a considerable percentage (around 17%) of female and male EFL learners refrained from opposing that type of person (see table ‘1’ above). This paints a clear picture of how important and

powerful they perceived her to be. Further, most of the reasons the two groups mentioned for doing so were of a distinct nature, as seen in chart ‘12’ below.

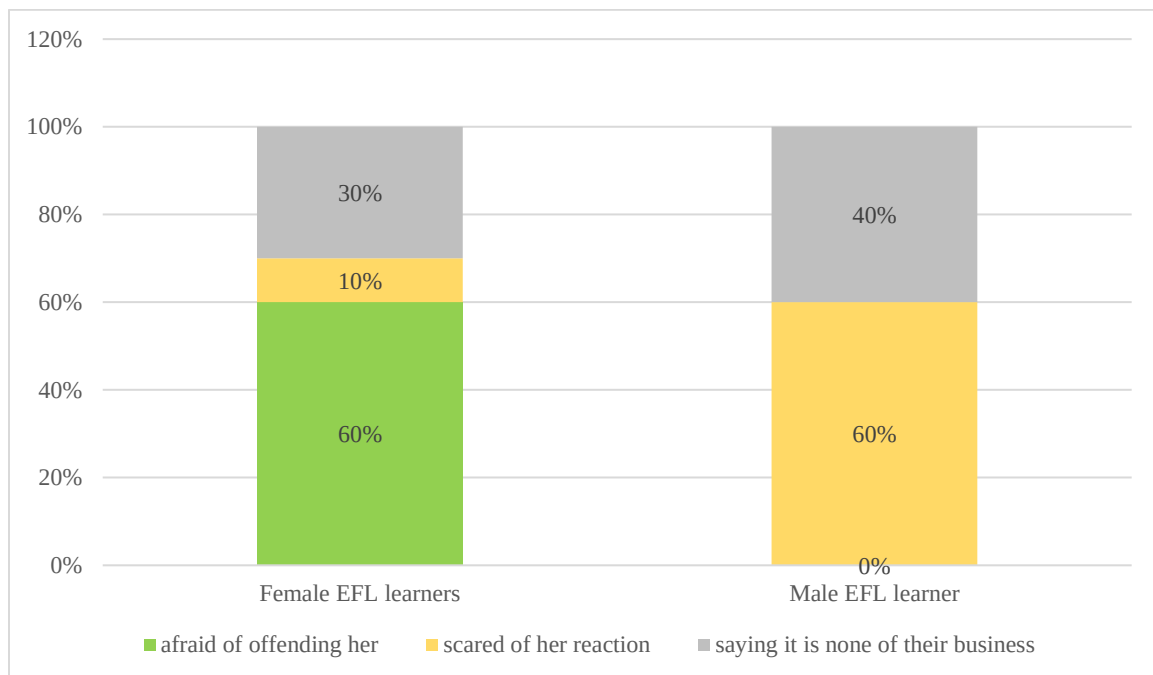


Chart 12: The Reasons Why EFL Learners Refused to Disagree with a Distant Female Who has More Social Power than the them

As displayed in Chart ‘12’ above, female EFL learners were mostly (60%) concerned that they would offend the doctor. This can be considered an illustration of their emotional side and how it affects their judgments. By contrast, the vast majority of male EFL learners (60%) were afraid of the doctor’s reaction to their disagreement. This can be seen as a demonstration of the domination of their mental side. Some of the reasons they mentioned are listed below. Last but not least, the fact that native speakers were not hesitant to verbalize their disagreements regardless of the position and gender of their doctor might be due to

ideological and perception differences between the two cultures of American and Bahraini people.

➤ **Examples of reasons for refusing to disagree**

❖ **Female EFL learner**

1. I won't disagree with her. It may be embarrassing if I did it in front of the whole class.
2. I don't say a thing. Not my business.

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. I will not say anything. She might hate me if I correct what she said.
2. I won't disagree with her. She will think I am trying to mock her.

Chart '13' below illustrates the various politeness strategies used within situation '12', along with their percentages.

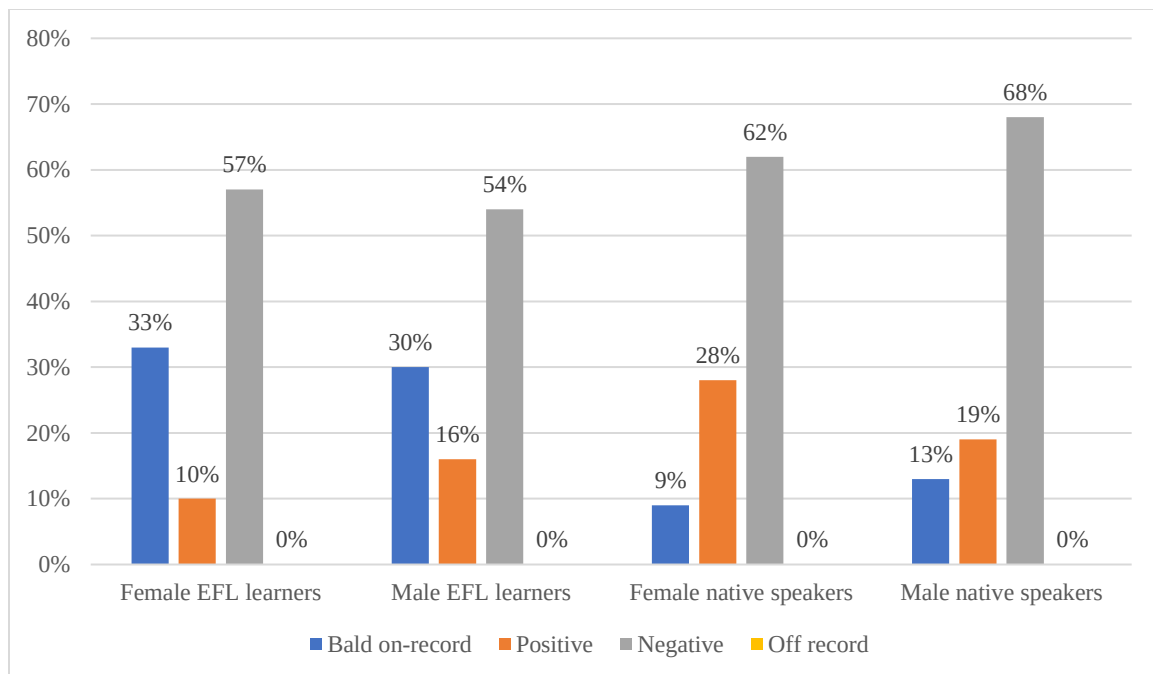


Chart 13: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has More Social Power than the Participants

Third, concerning the most employed strategy by all of the groups in disagreeing with their female doctor, it was negative politeness, as demonstrated in chart ‘13’ above. As a matter of fact, over fifty percent of the strategies each of the groups used were within the sphere of the aforementioned strategy. This demonstrates that they deem the female doctor to be of high importance, and illustrates their carefulness in formulating their arguments when addressing her. An example of it is “*Are you sure his name is Socrates? ...*”. Moreover, when it comes to the specific methods employed under the frame of the earlier mentioned strategy, they were hedging, expressing a personal opinion, asking questions and giving reasons (see table ‘19’ below).

Table (19): The Specific Methods of Negative Politeness Used When Disagreeing with a Distant Female with More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Expressing a personal opinion	29%	23%	37%	39%
Hedging	17%	9%	-	-
Giving reasons	21%	22%	-	9%
Asking questions	33%	46%	63%	52%

As shown in table ‘19’, the most used method among them was asking questions (over 30%), followed by expressing a personal opinion (around 30%). This further shows the high level of carefulness on the part of the participant. The reason being is that both of those methods hugely diminish the power of any disagreement rendering it a normal, unthreatening statement. Also, hedging was only applied by the two EFL learners’ groups. In addition to that, those two groups used way more giving reasons (around 20%) than native speakers. Actually, giving reasons was only employed by one of the two groups of native speakers and in an extremely low percentage (9%). This emphasizes the conclusions mentioned above about how EFL learners consider their female doctor to be more powerful than native speakers do. More examples of negative politeness are illustrated below.

➤ **Examples of negative politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. I'm sure Socrate left their mark behind, but I don't recall that they have written any books. *Can you tell me the name of one because I'm really interested to know.* (asking questions and giving reasons)
2. *What are the names of these books?* I would like to research this piece of information. *I think* I got it wrong. *I though* Socrate didn't write any books. (asking questions and expressing a personal opinion)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. *I think* you *might* make a mistake. Socrates did not write any number of books. (expressing a personal opinion and hedging).
2. Doctor, *I think* he did not write any books. I read a lot about him *because he is my favourite philosopher.* (expressing a personal opinion and giving reasons).

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *Are you sure of his name doctor? I thought* Socrates did not write any books. (asking questions and expressing a personal opinion)
2. That's interesting as I've never heard of any of his books. *could I have a list of his books so I can check them out?* (asking questions)

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. *Could you please give us some examples of his books?* Actually, I've never heard of any. (asking questions)

2. *Doctor, are you sure you are not mistaken him with another philosopher? I'm pretty sure that Socrates did not write any books.*
(asking questions and hedging)

Fourth, regarding the second most used strategy, it differed for the two sets of groups. While the two groups of EFL learners used more bald on-record (around 30%) than the groups of native speakers (less than 15%), the latter used more positive politeness (around 25%) than the former (around 13%). This means native speakers were more polite when addressing their female doctor when examining the situation in general. An example of positive politeness is “Could you *please* remind me of his name so that...”, and an example of bald on-record is “*No doctor...*”. Further, concerning the specific methods used under the umbrella of positive politeness, they were saying ‘please’, showing understanding, and highlighting respect, as mentioned in table ‘20’.

Table (20): The Specific Methods of Positive Politeness Used When Disagreeing with A Distant Female with More Social Power Than the Participants

	Female EFL Learners	Male EFL Learners	Female Native Speakers	Male Native Speakers
Saying please	91%	100%	85%	93%
Highlighting respect	9%	-	-	-
Showing understanding	-	-	15%	7%

As displayed in table ‘20’, the most used method of them was saying ‘please’(over 80%). Also, highlighting respect was only applied by female EFL

learners, which implies that they were trying to be more polite. More examples of positive politeness and bald on-record are shown below.

➤ **Examples of positive politeness**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

I *respectfully* disagree with you doctor because Im a fan of Socrates for so long and if he published any book Ill know about it but you might be correct. (highlighting respect)

❖ **Male EFL learners**

Can you tell us some of his books *please*? (saying please)

❖ **Female native speakers**

Could you *please* mention the names of some of his books? I would love to read Them. (saying please)

❖ **Male native speakers**

Could you *please* name some of his books? I thought he didn't write any. (saying please)

➤ **Examples of bald on record**

❖ **Female EFL learners**

1. Doctor you made a mistake. Socrates actually didn't write any books.
2. But Socrates didnt write any books dr. According to the internet, he had several theories but he never.

❖ **Male EFL learners**

1. I think you made a mistake doctor. *Socrates did not write any book.*
2. Are you sure doctor? *Socrates didn't write any.*

❖ **Female native speakers**

1. *Socrates was a great philosopher.* But I think he didn't write anything. *His students wrote about him.*
2. Are you sure you are not talking about another philosopher? *Socrates did not write any books.*

❖ **Male native speakers**

1. I think you are confusing him with another philosopher. *Socrates didn't write anything.*
2. Are you sure about that info doctor? *I think Socrates didn't write any book. He talked about his philosophical ideas during his long walks with his students. That's how they became known.*

Fifth, off-record politeness was never applied by any of the participants when arguing with their female doctor.

Part B: Addressing important points within the results

There are some interesting and rather important points within the results of each of the twelve situations that need to be addressed and discussed. In order to make those essential points more conspicuous, the strategies used by the four groups in each of the twelve situations need to be compared. Table '21' below

summarizes the whole previous section in a few words to make it easier to compare and contrast between the situations.

Table (21): A Brief Summary of the Data Gathered

The Situation	EFL Learners	Native Speakers
Situation 1: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has the Same Social Power	• More polite than native speakers. • Females more polite.	• Less polite than EFL learners. • The two genders are of equal politeness.
Situation 2: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has the Same Social Power	• More polite than native speakers. • Males a little bit more polite.	• Less polite than EFL learners. • Males more polite.
Situation 3: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has More Social Power	• More polite than native speakers. • The two genders are of equal politeness.	• Less polite than EFL learners. • The two genders are of equal politeness.
Situation 4: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has More Social Power	• More polite than native speakers. • Females a little bit more polite.	• Less polite than EFL learners. • The two genders are of equal politeness.
Situation 5: Disagreeing with a Close Female Who has Less Social Power	• As polite as native speakers. • The two genders are of equal politeness.	• As polite as EFL learners. • Females more polite.
Situation 6: Disagreeing with a Close Male Who has Less Social Power than the Participants	• As polite as native speakers. • Females more polite.	• As polite as EFL learners. • Females more polite.
Situation 7: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has the Same Social Power as You:	• Less polite than native speakers. • Males a little bit more polite.	• More polite than native speakers. • Females more polite.

Table (21) continued: A Brief Summary of the Data Gathered

The Situation	EFL Learners	Native Speakers
Situation 8: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has the Same Social Power as You	• Less polite than native speakers. • Females more polite.	• More polite than native speakers. • Females more polite.
Situation 9: Disagreeing with a Distant Female Who has the Less Social Power than You	• Less polite than native speakers. • The two genders are of equal politeness.	• More polite than EFL learners. • The two genders are of equal politeness.
Situation 10: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has Less Social Power than You	• More polite than native speakers. • Females are more polite.	• Less polite than EFL learners. • The two genders are of equal politeness.
Situation 11: Disagreeing with a Distant Male Who has More Social Power than You	• Less polite than native speakers. • The two genders are of equal politeness.	• More polite than EFL learners. • Females more polite.
Situation 12: Disagreeing with a distant female who has more social power than the participants	• Less polite than native speakers. • Males are more polite.	• More polite than EFL learners. • Females a little bit more polite.

As illustrated in table '21', when comparing all of the important data of the four groups (female and male EFL learners, and female and male native speakers), unusual patterns arise. The reason being that when looking at the first six situations, which required having disagreements with close people (e.g. siblings), EFL learners were generally more polite. On the other hand, when examining the second part of the DCT that was about arguing with socially distant people, native speakers were more polite. So what are the possible reasons behind this? The only logical explanations for this phenomenon are four: improper/inaccurate use of the English language on the part of EFL learners, some interference from their first language, which is Arabic, some influence from their

culture, and the fact that they study and use English in an educational sense only. These conclusions did not surface out of nowhere, for the evidence to support them lies within the answers of the EFL learners themselves. Let us examine the following examples:

1. *Im really delighted for your recommendation* but I was thinking of taking another dish that was in my mind but *thanks for your recommendation Im very thankful for it* maybe next time Ill order it. (*overextraction and thus unnatural use of the English language*)
2. I beg of you mom, *listen to me for once and go left.* (*sounds like a conversation in a historical movie and thus unnatural use of the English language*)
3. Let me show you *dear brother* the percentage of the people that said that and actually succeeded, but at the end this (*does not sound like something an English person would say*)
4. *Sister honey*, our mother do not just love you but wish you a good life. She wants you to go up in life. (*unnatural use of compliments*)

The highlighted parts in the four sentences above clearly demonstrate the lack of ability of EFL learners to use the English language properly. Most of the utterances do not seem natural, for they either show unnecessary excessive politeness (examples 1, 3, and 4) or extreme rigidity (example 2). Looking at these instances gives the impression that EFL learners knew a substantial amount of vocabulary, phrases, and expressions in English, and they did their best to utilize as much of them as possible to show their competence in the language. However, their knowledge of them was incomplete, or inaccurate, as they did not know whether or not those phrases and vocabulary were suitable for the situations in

which they were. These are but a few examples of the plethora of unusual phrases that were encountered during data analysis. With such inaccuracies in their use of the English language, it is not surprising that EFL learners looked much more polite when arguing with their close ones, for they constructed their responses using the vocabulary and phrases they were familiar with. In other words, they might not have utilized all of the strategies they used if they were talking in a language they were more proficient in, such as Arabic, but their insufficient knowledge of the English language resulted in them employing whatever they knew to argue in a situation. Consequently, a lot of those expressions were not appropriate to the situations they were facing, as it made them sound way more polite than needed. In fact, EFL learners did not just use more politeness strategies, but they also used a wider variety of sub strategies in most of the situations. When native speakers concentrated on one or two suitable sub strategies, EFL learners used up to five, or more.

Further, the aforementioned fact about EFL learners' insufficient use of the English language and its impact on their use of politeness strategies can also explain why they appeared less polite when having arguments with strangers (distant people). The reason being that native speakers, whose mother tongue is English, understandably tried to be more genteel with strangers. In order to do that, they started applying more politeness strategies to soften their disagreements. EFL learners, on the other hand, still used similar percentages of politeness strategies in general, which was why they appeared less polite.

Moreover, EFL learners appearing more polite when addressing their close ones might also be the result of them using English mostly in formal educational situations. This is clearly manifested in example '2' above. The language in that sentence seems to be taken from a Shakespearian text.

Furthermore, when comparing between the length of the answers of the groups, the vast majority of the arguments of EFL learners were much longer than native speakers as seen in example ‘5’ and ‘6’ below. This further supports the claim of them not being able to use the English language sufficiently enough, which was very likely why they used more sentences to make a point.

5. You might be right, however, there's a logical explanation for all of the "flaws" you just mentioned. A movie is a work of art; and art is subjective to the perspective of the viewer and to the artist's vision. You might not get it, but i'm pretty sure that you've missed couple of hidden details that would've made you feel differently. *(a response written by an EFL learner)*
6. No... the acting is wonderful and the events are more than logical. *(a response written by a native speaker)*

Further, the fact that the incompetence of EFL learners in the English language hindered their ability to form pragmatically acceptable disagreements in English closely echoes the findings of Bavarsad, Eslami-Rasekh, and Simin (2015), who did not just highlight this issue but went even further to anticipate that it might be the result of a deficient teaching system in Iran.

When it comes to the influence of Arabic on the language used by EFL learners, examples ‘7’ and ‘8’ below show and explain the impact clearly. However, the only influence that can be clearly seen is within the structure of the EFL learner’s language, and not in relation to their use of politeness strategies. In order to examine the latter point, the EFL learners’ disagreements in English should be compared to their disagreements in Arabic. Since this study did not have responses written in Arabic, the earlier mentioned point could not be examined. But the likelihood of it is still high, especially when considering that a number of

other studies highlighted the impact of EFL learners' mother tongue on their disagreements in English (Tabe and Warda (2018), Gharaghania, Rasekha, Dabaghia, Tohidianb (2011), and Lee (2011)).

7. If you become a millionaire without knowledge, then you will *lose all of your money within a night*. (similar to the Arabic saying 'بتضيع فلوسك في ليلة')
8. *Don't do that to me, leave me at rest*. If you take all of them. I will do worse intentionally, but if you give me some time, I will do my best. (similar to the Arabic saying 'لا تسوي ليبي جدي، خلني على راحتني')

In relation to the influence of culture on the responses of EFL learners, situations '1' and '2' can be considered the most obvious examples of that. The reason is that those two situations were about disagreeing with a male and a female cousin. In the Islamic culture, no matter how close your cousin of the opposite sex is, he/she is still considered a stranger whom the interlocutor can get married to. Thus, a level of formality must be maintained when addressing him/her. It is mentioned in the data presented in situation '1' that a few female EFL learners refused to share their opinion with their male cousin. Also, some of them actually complimented the choice of their male cousin before arguing with him. Furthermore, situation '2' was the only one in which male EFL learners used off-record politeness. They did it because they were addressing their female cousin, thus, they needed to be more polite. On the other hand, native speakers were way more direct with their cousins. This might be due to the fact that in America cousins are considered more like siblings. Based on this, culture might have had some influence on the responses of the participants. This finding corresponds with the results of Yan (2016), who demonstrated the clear effect of

cultural differences on the formation of disagreements between Chinese EFL learners and American native speakers.

Moreover, despite the fact that EFL learners' insufficient knowledge of English distorted their use of politeness strategies, they still were aware of the fact that they needed to be more or less polite depending on the situation they were in, for example, as mentioned above, in situation '2', males were a bit more polite and even utilized the off-record politeness. Another example is the large number of females and males who refused to answer situation '12' because they were afraid of offending the female doctor.

Aside from the reasons why EFL learners used the amounts of politeness strategies they did and the reasons behind that, there are a number of specific situations that contain a number of essential results. The first situation is situation '10' which talked about having disagreements with a distant male with less social power. In that situation, even though the interlocutor was a distant person, bald on-record permeated the disagreements of both native speakers and EFL learners. This might be due to the fact that a possession of theirs was damaged, thus, they were angry about it. The second situation is situation '11' which contained having a disagreement with a male that has more social power than the participants. In that situation, EFL learners used almost the same number of strategies as when they were addressing the distant male with less social power that damaged their possession. This might be because another important possession of theirs was at risk, which was their grades. Consequently, it can be deduced that EFL learners used the English language in a more direct manner when the safety of their possessions is the center of the debate. Also, native speakers were more polite with the male that had more social power than them, even though their grades were in danger.

Part C: Answering the questions of the research paper

In this section the questions of the research study are answered.

- **Question 1: Is there a difference between the politeness strategies used by speakers with different social distance in the realization of speech acts of disagreement?**

As mentioned in the previous section EFL learners were mostly more polite when addressing people who are close to them than native speakers. On the other hand, native speakers were generally more polite when arguing with strangers. The reasons for these differences are explained in details in the previous section.

- **Question 2: Is there a difference between the politeness strategies used by both genders in the use of speech acts of disagreement?**

In relation to the effect of gender on the degree of politeness of EFL learners, females EFL learners were generally more polite than males, as they frequently used a wider variety of politeness strategies and their techniques. They also employed a slightly higher percentage of negative and positive politeness than males in most of the situations. However, males were specifically more polite with female interlocutors, especially those who were at their same level of social power, regardless of their social distance (situations ‘2’ and ‘7’). They were also more polite when addressing the distant female with more social power than them (situation ‘12’). This means that male EFL learners were generally more careful

when having an argument with female interlocutors, and thus used more politeness strategies to reduce the power of their statements.

Further, the two genders used similar degrees of politeness when addressing their mothers (situation '3'). This might be because they were raised to talk to their mothers in similar ways.

When it comes to English native speakers, females were more polite than male in most of the situations. Also, the two genders were of equal politeness when arguing with their parents (situations '3' and '4'). This might indicate that they were socially conditioned to address their parents in particular ways.

Moreover, the fact that both of the female groups, EFL learners and native speakers, were more polite than males in general matches the findings of Sharqawi and Anthony (2019), and Bavarsad, Eslami-Rasekh, and Simin (2015) whose results clearly stated that female participants were more polite than males.

- **Question 3: Is there a difference between the politeness strategies used by speakers with different social power in the realization of speech acts of disagreement?**

When it comes to female and male EFL learners, gender was more important than social power. That was clearly manifested in the way both of the groups were trying their best to be polite to distant females of more and less social power than them (situations '9' and '12'). On the other hand, they were extremely direct with males of more and less social power than them (situations '10' and '11').

On the other hand, for native speakers, social power was important. This is clearly demonstrated in situations '5' and '6'. Those were the only two

situations dealing with close people where native speakers became as polite as EFL learners. This is attributed to the fact that they were addressing their little sisters and brothers, people who have less social power than them. Also, they were more polite with their male doctor in situation ‘11’ even though their grades were at stake, as he possesses more social power than them.

14. Conclusion

This study employed Brown and Levinson’s (1978) model of politeness strategies to examine the distinctions between the politeness strategies used by university EFL learners and American native speakers in the speech act of disagreement. The variables it was concerned with were gender, social status, and social distance. Its sample consisted of 63 EFL learners (41 females and 22 males), and 20 native speakers (10 females and 10 males). The EFL learners who took part in this study were EFL learners who were currently studying in the English Language and Literature Department at the University of Bahrain. All of them were in their fourth year of study and above, thus they were supposed to be advanced students who can employ the English language to form proper disagreements. The instrument utilized to gather information was a DCT that was taken from a previous study conducted by Khoirunnisa and Hardjanto (2018), and modified by the researcher to fit what was needed in this study.

With reference to the findings of this study, first, one of the most important results was that, in comparison to native speakers, EFL learners were generally more polite when addressing people who were close to them (e.g. family members), and less polite when addressing strangers. The reason for that phenomenon was that EFL learners used similar amounts of strategies in most of the situations. As a result, they appeared more polite when native speakers were

more direct (i.e. with close people), and less polite when native speakers became more polite (i.e. with distant people). This might be the outcome of several reasons such as improper utilization of the English language by EFL learners, an influence from their first language, which is Arabic, an impact from their culture, and them learning and employing English in an educational sense most of the time. The first reason was the most obvious in terms of its influence. Second, when it comes to the impact of Arabic on the EFL learner's use of English it was not determined because of the restricted domain of this study. However, its possibility was extremely high, as several examples of interference from Arabic on the general pragmatics of the responses of EFL learners were found. Third, EFL learners were still aware of the necessity of using different politeness strategies in different situation, and thus there were some changes in their use of them. For example, they tried to utilize more positive politeness when addressing their female professor. Fourth, EFL learners were the most direct in situations where the other interlocutor has damaged one of their possessions, regardless of his/her status. This was clearly manifested in their responses to the professor who has given them an 'F' by mistake. Fifth, in terms of the impact of gender on the degree of politeness, female EFL learners were a bit more polite than male EFL learners, for they utilized more positive and negative politeness than males most of the time. They also used a wider variety of sub strategies within the different politeness strategies. However, males tried to be more genteel when addressing female interlocutors. Last but not least, for EFL learners, gender was more essential than social status in determining the types of politeness strategies employed, this was clearly manifested in how they treated female interlocutors of different status with more respect than male interlocutors.

The significance and impact of this study on society are demonstrated below. First, the results of this study can easily be used by English language teachers to show EFL learners how their disagreements differ from native speakers and the reasons behind those distinctions. Consequently, EFL learners can focus on those reasons (e.g. using an English expression without knowing if its suitable in a particular situation), and try to lessen their effects. Second, EFL learners can use the responses of native speakers as a model on which to base their disagreements, thus becoming more nativelike when arguing in English. To put it simply, the findings of this study are extremely valuable in terms of helping EFL learners fix their mistakes in making disagreements, and give them a list of paradigms of how to argue in a normal, everyday English.

The plans that should be put into action based on the results of this study are as follows. One important measure that should be taken by English language teachers is to explain clearly to EFL learners that knowing a language is not limited to knowing expressions in that language, for a learner of any language should know whether or not a particular expression is appropriate in a certain situation. Furthermore, teachers need to constantly advice EFL learners to use the English language in various situations, formal and informal. They also need to regularly teach EFL learners how to modify their language based on the level of formality of the situation they are dealing with, otherwise, EFL learners will continue to communicate based on what is prominent in their educational environments i.e., formal use of the English language.

15. Further studies

One important idea that is recommended for a future research paper is comparing between disagreements of Bahraini EFL learners in Bahraini Arabic and then in English. Such a study will determine whether there is an influence from the former on the latter.

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17. Appendix ‘A’

The Disagreement Test for Students from Fourth-year of Study and Above

Personal information: -

Gender: Male Female

Year of study: Fourth Fifth Sixth Seventh

Instructions:

Please respond to each of the situations below as naturally as possible as if you are taking part in the conversations.

Example:

Your aunt says that studying English literature is worthless, but you disagree, so you say:

Your response:

Well, to tell the truth, I don't think there is any field of knowledge that is worthless. I just believe that it depends on how a person views that field, and whether or not he is interested in it. One person might think history is a waste of time since it is about things that happened in the past, another might use it to understand how the world ended up the way it did. *(you choose how long your answer is, it does not need to be a whole paragraph).*

Situation 1:

You are shopping for shoes for a very important ceremony with your two close cousins who are of the same age as you (Ahmed and Sami). Ahmed has chosen a pair of shoes that you think looks worn out, and does not suit him. However, Sami says to him ‘You really need to buy them! They look cool on you!’. You want to disagree with both of them, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 2:

Your close cousin Nada, whose age is the same as you, criticizes a specific movie saying that 'Its events are illogical and the acting is so bad.' You happened to love that movie, so you want to disagree with her, thus you say:

Your response:

Situation 3:

You are in a car with your mother. You know the way very well, and the fact that you have to turn left at the next intersection, but your mother says: 'I am turning right. It might be a shortcut.' You want to disagree with her, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 4:

You have got bad scores on a number of your mid-term tests. Your father says to you: 'I'm taking away your PlayStation, phone, and I Pad for a whole month. You should focus only on your studies instead of wasting your time on such toys'. You disagree with his decision so you say:

Your response:

Situation 5:

Your mother grounded your little sister, who is in her middle school, for failing in an exam. You hear her say 'I hate my mother; she doesn't love me'. You want to disagree with her so you say:

Your response:

Situation 6:

Your little brother, who is in his middle school, says to you ‘I’ll leave school and start a YouTube channel. I’ll work so hard on it to make it famous. This way I can earn a lot of money and become a millionaire.’ You want to disagree with him so you say:

Your response:

Situation 7:

You are sitting next to a girl in the first day of orientation on campus. You have never met her before. However, she suddenly says to you: ‘I’ve no idea why my parents sent me here again, I would rather work and make some money. Going to the university is not just useless, but a waste of money too.’ You want to disagree with what she said, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 8:

It is the beginning of a new semester. A new classmate of yours, which you have never seen before, talks about a doctor you know very well and respect so much. The classmate says ‘that doctor seems to be so rigid, I bet he’ll make this course a living hell.’ You want to disagree with him so you say:

Your response:

Situation 9:

You are sitting in a restaurant. The waitress comes to you and says ‘Good evening. I am Amal, and I will be your waitress tonight. For the special menu of this week, we are offering mushroom cream soup. I recommend you to try it. It’s so delicious.’ However, you want to refuse her offer, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 10:

You have taken one of your Jackets to the laundry. You go to take it, but you notice that one of its sleeves is burned a bit. When you inform the man working there, he says ‘I think it was already burned when you brought it here’. You are sure this is not true, thus you want to disagree with him, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 11:

You submitted a very important paper, on which you worked so hard, to your doctor, Rami, during Monday class. Today is Thursday. The doctor returns the paper to all of your classmates except you. After that, he comes to your desk, looks at you, and says: ‘I’m sorry, you didn’t submit anything, so I gave you an F.’ You want to disagree with what he has said so you say:

Your response:

Situation 12:

Your English doctor, Wafaa, says that ‘Socrates wrote lots of important books’. But you know for a fact that Socrates did not write any book. You want to disagree with her, so you say:

Your response:

18. Appendix 'B'

The Disagreement Test for English Native Speakers

Personal information: -

Gender: Male Female

Age: below 15 15-19 20-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 above
40

Instructions:

Please respond to each of the situations below as naturally as possible as if you are taking part in the conversations.

Example:

Your aunt says that studying English literature is worthless, but you disagree, so you say:

Your response:

Well, to tell the truth, I don't think there is any field of knowledge that is worthless. I just believe that it depends on how a person views that field, and whether or not he is interested in it. One person might think history is a waste of time since it is about things that happened in the past, another might use it to understand how the world ended up the way it did. *(you choose how long your answer is, it does not need to be a whole paragraph).*

Situation 1:

You are shopping for shoes for a very important ceremony with your two close cousins who are of the same age as you (John and Adam). John has chosen a pair of shoes that you think looks worn out, and does not suit him. However, Adam says to him 'You really need to buy them! They look cool on you!'. You want to disagree with both of them, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 2:

Your close cousin Janet, whose age is the same as you, criticizes a specific movie saying that 'Its events are illogical and the acting is so bad.' You happened to love that movie, so you want to disagree with her, thus you say:

Your response:

Situation 3:

You are in a car with your mother. You know the way very well, and the fact that you have to turn left at the next intersection, but your mother says: 'I am turning right. It might be a shortcut.' You want to disagree with her, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 4:

You have got bad scores on a number of your mid-term tests. Your father says to you: 'I'm taking away your PlayStation, phone, and I Pad for a whole month. You should focus only on your studies instead of wasting your time on such toys'. You disagree with his decision so you say:

Your response:

Situation 5:

Your mother grounded your little sister, who is in her middle school, for failing in an exam. You hear her say 'I hate my mother; she doesn't love me'. You want to disagree with her so you say:

Your response:

Situation 6:

Your little brother, who is in his middle school, says to you 'I'll leave school and start a YouTube channel. I'll work so hard on it to make it famous. This way I can

earn a lot of money and become a millionaire.’ You want to disagree with him so you say:

Your response:

Situation 7:

You are sitting next to a girl in the first day of orientation on campus. You have never met her before. However, she suddenly says to you: ‘I’ve no idea why my parents sent me here again, I would rather work and make some money. Going to the university is not just useless, but a waste of money too.’ You want to disagree with what she said, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 8:

It is the beginning of a new semester. A new classmate of yours, which you have never seen before, talks about a doctor you know very well and respect so much. The classmate says ‘that doctor seems to be so rigid, I bet he’ll make this course a living hell.’ You want to disagree with him so you say:

Your response:

Situation 9:

You are sitting in a restaurant. The waitress comes to you and says ‘Good evening. I am Antonia, and I will be your waitress tonight. For the special menu of this week, we are offering mushroom cream soup. I recommend you to try it. It’s so delicious.’ However, you want to refuse her offer, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 10:

You have taken one of your Jackets to the laundry. You go to take it, but you notice that one of its sleeves is burned a bit. When you inform the man working there, he says ‘I think it was already burned when you brought it here’. You are sure this is not true, thus you want to disagree with him, so you say:

Your response:

Situation 11:

You submitted a very important paper, on which you worked so hard, to your doctor, Jacob, during Monday class. Today is Thursday. The doctor returns the paper to all of your classmates except you. After that, he comes to your desk, looks at you, and says: ‘I’m sorry, you didn’t submit anything, so I gave you an F.’ You want to disagree with what he has said so you say:

Your response:

Situation 12:

Your English doctor, Sarah, says that ‘Socrates wrote lots of important books’. But you know for a fact that Socrates did not write any book. You want to disagree with her, so you say:

Your response:

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها

جامعة البحرين

استخدام دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية لاستراتيجيات التأدب في حدث الاختلاف الكلامي

أطروحة مقدمة كجزء من متطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في الدراسات التطبيقية في اللغة
الإنجليزية

إعداد الطالبة

فاطمة عبد الله جعفر

20145273

إشراف

د. نوري رحومة العجيلي

أستاذ اللغويات المشارك

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية و آدابها

جامعة البحرين

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ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الاختلافات بين استراتيجيات التأدب المستخدمة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعة والأمريكيين المتحدثين باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أم في الاختلاف في الكلام باستخدام نموذج براون وليفينسون (1978). وقد تناولت هذه الدراسة متغيرات الجنس والحالة الاجتماعية والمسافة الاجتماعية وتكونت العينة من 63 متعلماً للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (41 فرداً من الإناث و 22 فرداً من الذكور) و 20 متحدثاً باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أم (10 أفراد من الإناث و 10 أفراد من الذكور). وكان متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الذين شاركوا في هذه الدراسة يدرسون في وقت إجراء البحث في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها في جامعة البحرين في السنة الرابعة من الدراسة وما بعدها والسبب في هذا الاختيار هو أنهم يعتبرون طلاباً في مستوى متقدم إذ يمكنهم استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية بالشكل الملائم. ومن حيث جمع البيانات كانت الأداة المستخدمة هي ال DCT (مهمة استكمال الخطاب) والتي تم اعتمادها في دراسة سابقة قام بها Khoirunnisa و Hardjanto عام 2018 وتم إجراء تعديلات عليها من قبل الباحث لتناسب احتياجات هذه الدراسة. وقد أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن السبب الذي جعل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يبدون التأدب إلى حد ما هو أن المتحدثين باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أم اختاروا نسباً أعلى أو أقل من استراتيجيات التأدب لتناسب المواقف المختلفة في حين استخدم متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية نسباً مماثلة من تلك الاستراتيجيات في معظم الحالات ويعود ذلك إلى قصور في الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. علاوة على ذلك تبين أن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كانوا على دراية بضرورة استخدام استراتيجيات التأدب المختلفة في المواقف المختلفة وبالتالي كانت هناك بعض التغييرات في استخدامها وفقاً للموقف المعين. علاوة على ذلك كشفت الدراسة أن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الإناث كن بصورة عامة أكثر تهذيباً من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الذكور ومن حيث الأهمية تبين أن جنس المتحدث أكثر أهمية من الوضع الاجتماعي في تحديد أنواع استراتيجيات التأدب التي يستخدمها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات الرئيسية: حدث الاختلاف الكلامي - التأدب الإيجابي - التأدب السلبي - التأدب غير المعلن ، أسلوب التأدب المكشوف.