

**Sudan University of Science and Technology**

**College of Graduate Studies**

**College of Languages**

**Department of English Language**

**Investigating Students' Problems in Using Politeness  
Expressions**

**تقصى مشكلات الطلاب فى استخدام عبارات التهذيب**

(A case Study of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year University Students at Sudan University of  
Science and Technology)

A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of M.A in English Language

( Applied Linguistics)

**Submitted by:**

Adam Ahmed Adam Suleiman

**Supervised by:**

Dr. Abdarahman Abulgassim Salih

**June 2016**

## Dedication

To the whole of my family, particularly, my parents who dedicated their levies to help me in my studies.

To my fiancé.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor Dr, Abdarahman for his guidance during this research. Also my greatest gratitude goes to Dr, Suleiman Nuzul, a lecturer at Nyala University who always encourages me in my academic life. Thanks are also extended to the libraries which provided me with references to conduct this study;

Library of Al Neleen University faculty of Arts

Library of Khartoum University

Library of Sudan University faculty of Education

I am also very grateful to all the people,

Specially friends for their advices. Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my family for their unconditional support throughout my life and my studies.

## **Abstract**

This study aims at investigating students' problems in using polite expressions of greetings, permissions and requests. It has been conducted for the students of second year at Sudan University of Science and Technology. The researcher adopted the descriptive statistical analytical approach, using a test as a tool for gathering data. The sample of this study consists of 30 participants including both genders. After the analysis data process; the researcher has come out with these findings; students are familiar with polite greeting expressions. In contrast, they are no longer able to ask for permissions and making requests politely when they interact in different social context. And they do support the suggested ways of adjusting polite expressions. Depending on the results of the study the researcher recommends that; there should be an English lab for the communication courses (audio-visual aids) to reflect the linguistic behaviors of the native speakers. And these courses should be taken into account from the lower university levels.

## المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الي تقصي مشكلات الطلاب في استخدام عبارات التهذيب، علي وجه الخصوص عبارات التحايا،الاستئذان،والطلب. اجريت هذه الدراسة في جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا لطلاب السنة الدراسية الثانية وعددهم ثلاثون طالبا .استخدم الباحث طريقة الوصف الاحصائي التحليلي .كما استخدم الاختبار كاداة لجمع البيانات. ومن اهم النتائج التي توصل اليها الباحث بعد عملية تحليل البيانات، ليس هنالك مشاكل في استخدام العبارات التهذيبة عند التحايا لدي الطلاب .وفي المقابل نجد ان الطلاب غير قادرين على الاستئذان وتقديم الطلب باسلوب لغوى مهذب يناسب مختلف مكانة الاشخاص الذين يتحدثون معهم . كما اثني الطلاب علي الطرق المقترحة من قبل الباحث لاكتساب عبارات التهذيب .بناءا علي هذه النتائج يوصي الباحث بتوفير معامل ذات الادوات المرئية والمسموعة لتدريس اللغة الانجليزية.كما يوصي الباحث بتدريس عبارات التهذيب اللغوى منذ المراحل الدراسية الاولي في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بالجامعة.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Subject	Page No.
	Dedication	i
	Acknowledgements	ii
	Abstract	iii
	المستخلص	iv
	Table of Contents	v
	<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.0	Background	
1.1	Statement of the problem	
1.2	Research Questions	
1.3	Research Hypothesis	
1.4	Methodology	
1.5	Population of the study	
1.6	The research samples	
1.7	Objectives of the research	
1.8	The research significance	
1.9	Instruments	
1.10	The research Limits	
	<b>CHAPTER Two: Literature Review and previous studies</b>	
2.0	Introduction	
2.1	Concept of politeness	
2.2	History of politeness	
2.3	Types of politeness	
2.4	Principles for being polite	
2.5	Face want	
2.6	Negative and positive face	
2.7	Examples for polite expressions	
2.8	Politeness and politeness formulas	
2.9	Politeness and interaction	
2.10	Perspectives on politeness	
2.10.1	The social norm view	
2.10.2	The conversational maxim view	
2.10.3	Face saving view	
2.10.4	The conversational – contract view	
2.11	Previous studies	
2.12	Conclusion	

	<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.0	Introduction	
3.1	Methodology	
3.2	Population	
3.3	Sample	
3.4	Tools	
3.5	Procedure	
3.6	Validity of the test	
3.7	Reliability of the test	
3.8	Summary	
	<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS DISCUSSION</b>	
4.0	Introduction	
4.1	Data analysis	
4.2	Over all descriptive results	
4.3	Hypotheses discussion	
4.4	Conclusion	
	<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES</b>	
5.0	Introduction	
5.1	Research findings	
5.2	Recommendations	
5.3	Suggestions for further studies	
	References	
	Appendices	

## TABLES

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Table 1	24
Table 2	26
Table3	28



# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.0 Background

Language serves a range of speech functions in communication process; it is always adjusted the speech to suit the social context of speech. The language we talk to a child maybe different from language we talk to our fathers and mothers, or elder people in general or colleague.

Any address form of a language that we utter has specific functions to play, and these functions are often called functions of language, such as: expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, phatic (social function). Obviously, in linguistics speech functions refer to purposes which a speaker tends to convey to a listener through speech forms. Within these speech functions, the study will focus on directive and phatic (social function). And politeness as a factor that aids in selecting an appropriate language forms to suit our speech with context that we talk to. Politeness may influence the choice between different address forms, and the study will investigate the social dimensions that influence what is considered polite in different situations. Being linguistically polite is often a matter of selecting linguistic forms which express the appropriate degree of social distance or which recognize relevant status or power differences.

## **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Using polite expressions and relevant language forms to a social context are often problematic for non native speakers of a language. The problem which the current study endeavours to investigate is the use of polite expressions particular in offering requests; ask permission and greetings in students' interaction. They may not consider the status of those whom they talking to in terms of being linguistically polite, which means, they use the same form of language in their greetings and making request among themselves and those who have higher rank than them.

## **1.2 Research questions:**

As this present study tends to investigate the use of politeness in students' greetings, requests and permission. It attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- To what extent do students encounter difficulties in using politeness in their greetings expressions?
- 2- How do students learn to adjust politeness in their speech with different social context that they talk to?
- 3- How far are students able to express their requests and permission with different language forms to meet the social status of receiver?

### **1.3 Research hypotheses**

The current study attempts to test the following hypotheses:

- Students encounter difficulties of using politeness by the students, especially in their greetings.
- Politeness is likely to be adjusted by students with different social contexts whom they talk to, through adoption of Language forms and culture which are used by the native speakers of English.
- Students are not able to express their requests and permission with different language forms to suite the social status of the receiver.

### **1.4 Methodology:.**

The problem which the current study tends to investigate is the use of polite expressions of greetings, requests, and permissions in students' interaction. The researcher adopts descriptive statistical analytical method to collect the research needed data

### **1.5 Population of The study**

The subject of this study is students in particular, students of Sudan university of Science and Technology department of English in particular.

### **1.6 The research sample**

The participants of this research consist of students of the second year at Sudan University of science and Technology. College of Languages

Department of English. Their number is 30 participants; the researcher has chosen them randomly regardless to their gender specification.

## **1.7 Instruments**

The researcher used a test as a tool to collect the needed data for the research.

## **1.8 Objectives of the research:**

The objectives of the present study are to:

- See whether the students encounter some difficulties in using politeness particular in their greetings.
- Find out, how the students could possibly learn to soften their speech and make it more politely when they communicate with different social contexts.
- Figure out whether students are able to express their requests and permission with different language forms to be convenient to the social status of the receiver or not.

## **1.9 The research significance:**

Being linguistically polite is a crucial matter in human beings, because, whenever we soften our speech and make it more politely, makes others more pleasant and understand us easily and peacefully. It could be said linguistic politeness is considered as a medium of social prosperity and development, because having mutual understanding and respect is a result of being linguistically polite. One important aspect of being human

is to know to behave and how to interpret the behaviour of others politely in a wider range of social situations. When we speak we are not concerned with information we are conveying, but also the effect that our words will have on those we are talking to. Therefore, linguistic politeness is significant in human speech. The significance with the current study tends to reflect embodied in: Fostering social solidarity, maintaining relationships, closeness and intimacy between participants who involve in interaction.

### **1.10 The research limits:**

The study is limited to the field of pragmatics, particularly focusing on the area of politeness. The setting of this study is Sudan university of Science and Technology, the academic year 2016-2027.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and previous studies**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and previous studies**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

As this research tends to investigate student's problem in linguistic politeness in particular, the use of polite expressions such as, of greetings, requests and permission. In this chapter the researcher reviews the literatures, which are considered closely related to this study. Also the researcher could possibly define the term politeness linguistically, it's history, tracing it's types and perspectives on politeness which have made by some scholars of linguistic studies.

#### **2.1 Concept of Politeness**

According to Webster's third new international dictionary; Grove, (1976) politeness is; exhibi ng appearance of considera on, tact, deference, courtesy or grace resulting sometimes from sincere consideration of others sometimes from mere regard for etiquette. Then being polite is to show consideration, tact, deference, courtesy, or sometimes for regard etiquette.

Politeness is more concretely defined in Longman Dictionary of applied linguistics, Richards, Pla , & Weber, (1985): politeness in language study

a- how language express social distance between speakers and their different social role relationships.



b- how-face work; that is, the attempt to establish, maintain, and save face during a conversation is carried out in a speech community.

As languages are different they differ in how they express politeness too. Thus, politeness markers include differences between formal speech and colloquial speech, and the of address forms. In expressing politeness Brown & Levinson,(1978) distinguished between positive politeness strategies (those which show the closeness, intimacy, and rapport between speaker and hearer) and negative politeness strategies (those which indicate the social distance between the speaker and hearer). In accordance with this definition, politeness firstly, reflects the way in which the social distance between the participants in a discourse and their different relations are expressed in languages; and secondly reflects the way to establish, maintain, and save face during a conversation. Leech, (1983) defines politeness as those behaviors that are aimed at the establishment and maintenance of community. i.e. the ability of participants in a socio-communicative interaction to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony.

Locaff, (1972) interprets politeness as those forms of behaviors that have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction. The term politeness has several denotations and connotations after its interpretation by different scholars. It should be made clear that linguistic politeness is crucially a social phenomenon, so it should be understood in different culture. Axia, (1987) defines linguistic politeness as linguistic abilities required to establish and maintain social interaction. The requirements of politeness are stated as follow:

- Ability to take into account for the other person's attitude and intention; recognition of the reciprocity, and the relationship between the participants in the exchange (for example, status, role, degree of familiarity... etc and the awareness of the degree of formality or informality of the social situation (for example a party, a lecture, etc.)

According to Wordhaugh, (2003) politeness involves taking account of the feelings of others. A polite person makes others feel comfortable. Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship to you. Inappropriate choices may be considered rude. Using an imperative such as "stop talking or shut the door" to a superior at work is likely to earn the office junior a reprimand. According to him, making decisions about what is or is not considered polite in any community therefore involves assessing social relationships along the dimensions of social distance or solidarity, and relative power or status, he says, we need to understand the social values of a society in order to speak politely.

## **2.2 The history of politeness**

Pearsall,(1998) in The New Oxford Dictionary of English states that, the term 'politeness' or 'polite' is broadly defined as having or showing behavior that is respectful and considered of other people. Klein,(1994) mentions that, the term 'politeness' or 'polite' date back to the fifteenth century and was derived from Late Medieval Latin *politus*. (to smooth,' polish') but came into prominence in late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The history of politeness is characterized by its origin from the big city of Rome , its way of life and its social demands in courtly

life. Ehlich, (1991) writes that the problem with politeness as a phenomenon, its expressions and conceptualizations is a shift of focus away from the research of their historical dimension. He defines the term politeness as a social activities where the value of polite behavior is realized by the social standard. Politeness must be understood within its context. He uses the example of some aspects of the development of politeness in Ancient Greece and Rome. The focus of this example is the representation of the right to speak, social contract, the expression of respect and the expression of disregard. Greeting and address in Ancient Greek are very simple. Politeness developed late in Greek antiquity. The reason for differentiation in terms of address a bureaucratic apparatus, kingship and emperorship. This development is advanced with the contact of Latin. The development of politeness is correlated by strong social differentiation. Politeness thus gradually evolved within these specific social conditions. Elich, (1991) writes that the development of politeness from the middle ages to the early modern period is characterized by programs and propaganda. The first sign of the equivalent to politeness is towlines in Latin. The secular upper class in the Middle Ages use politeness or courtesy to express their self-confidence which originates from their own feelings of what distinguishes them. The function is thus to express a social locution at the feudal court. The urban man, the refined man, the pleasant man, the witty man, the frugal man are different terms of propaganda used to develop a politeness concept which is built up around the basic knightly virtues of loyalty and mutual trust.

## 2.3 Types of Politeness

Wordhaugh, (2003) makes distinction between two different types of politeness.

- Positive politeness: which is solidarity oriented. It emphasizes shared attitudes and values. When the boss suggests that a subordinate should use first name to her, this is positive politeness move, expressing solidarity and minimizing status differences. A shift to a more informal style using slang and swear words will function similarly as an expressions of positive politeness.
- Negative politeness: pays people respect and avoids intruding on them. Negative politeness involves expressing oneself appropriately in terms of social distance and expressing social status differences. Using title + last name to your superiors, and older people that you don't know well, are further examples of negative politeness.

Being polite may also involve the dimension of formality. In a formal situation the appropriate way of talking to your brother will depend on your roles in the context. If he acting as a law court then calling him " Tom will be considered disrespectful, while at the dinner table calling him your honor" will be perceived as equally rude. "

## 2.4 Principles for being Polite

According to Youle, (1996) it is possible to treat politeness as a fixed concept, as in the idea of polite social behavior, or etiquette, within a culture. He also suggests a number of different general

principles for being polite in social interaction within a culture. Some of these might include being tactful, modest and sympathetic. Toward others. Let us assume that such norms and principals exist in a society at large within an interaction, however, there is a more narrowly specified type of politeness at work. In order to describe it we need the concept of face.

Face is defined by Yule, (1996) as the public self-image of person. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that every one has and expects everyone to recognize. Politeness, in interaction can then be defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face. In this sense, politeness can be accomplished in situation of social distance or closeness. Showing awareness of another person's face when the another seems socially distant is often described in term of respect or deference. Showing equivalent awareness when that other is socially close is often described in term of friendliness, camaraderie, or solidarity. The first type might be found in student's question to his teacher shown as in example ( a) and the second type in the friend's question to the same individual, as in as in example ( b)

a- Excuse me Mr. Buckingham, but can I talk to you for a minute?

b- Hey, Bucky got a minute?

It follows from this type of approach there will be different kind of politeness associated and marked linguistically with the assumption of relative social distance or closeness. In most English speaking contexts, the participants in an interaction often have to determine, as they

speaker, the relative social distance between them, and hence their face wants.

## **2.5 Face want**

Yule, (1996) In this discussion assumes that the participants involved in Interactions are not living in a context which has created social rigidly fixed social relationships. Their everyday social interactions, people generally behave as if their expectations concerning their public self-image or their face wants will be respected. If a speaker says something that represents a threat to another individual's expectation regarding self-image, it's described as face threatening act. Alternatively, given the possibility that some actions might be interpreted as a threat to the others' faces. The speaker can say something to lessen the possible threat. This is called a face -saving act.

Imagine a late scene, where a young neighbor is playing his music very loud and older couples are trying to sleep. One of them in the following proposes is a face threatening act and the other suggests a face saving-act.– Him: I'm going to tell him to stop that awful noise right now.

- Her: perhaps you could just ask him if he is going to stop soon because it is generally expected that each person will attempt to respect the face wants of others. There are many different ways of performing face saving acts.

## 2.6 Negative and Positive Face

Yule, (1996) states two types of face; positive and negative face. When we attempt to save another's face pay attention to their negative face wants or their positive face wants. A person's negative face is needed to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not be imposed on by others. The word negative here does not mean "bad" it's just the opposite pole from "positive". A person's positive face is the need to be accepted, even liked by others to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others. In simple terms negative face is the need to be independent and positive face is the need to be connected.

## 2.7 Examples for Polite Expressions

According to Fuchs, Wertheimer, and Bonner, (1949) there are some models or expressions are often used to make permission more polite, here are some of them:

May, could, can, and do you mind if .....?

- We use may, could and can to ask permission.

- May I call you next Friday?
- Could we use our dictionaries?
- Can he come to class with me next week?

Some people feel that may is more polite than can and could. We can use may when we ask polite permission to do something as in the following,

- May I live the room?
- We often say "please" when we ask permission
- Could I ask a question, please?

- We use "do you mind if" to ask for permission when it is possible your action will inconvenience someone or make someone uncomfortable.

As in:

A. Do you mind if I clean up tomorrow?

B. yes, actually, I do mind. I hate to see a mess in the kitchen in the morning.

They also suggest "will, would, could, can, would you mind.....?" for making requests. Will for informal request, and we use could, and would to soften requests and make them sound less demanding. As in:

- Can you turn on the TV?
- Could you please close the door?
- Would you shut the window please?
- Would you mind waiting for a few minutes?



## 2.8 Politeness and Politeness Formulas

According to Spolsky, (1998) speech event include both a speaker-writer and listener- reader, it is not surprising that language is a particularly sensitive, in the rules for speech use, to the relations between the two parties. Just as a good actor can utter a single sentence can express a wide range of emotional status of the speaker, so the choice of an appropriate message form can be modified to express a wide range of attitudes of the speaker. Given the same general situation, I can pass information or make a request or simply greet in a whole set of different ways that will define my attitude to the listener and the important I give to him or her.

In its simplest terms, politeness consists of the recognition of the listener and his or her rights in the situation. Requests, which are an imposition on the listener mitigated by being made indirectly as questions ("could you possibly pass me the salt") or as statements ("I think that is the salt beside your plate"), or being adding formulas like "pleas" if you could be so kind. Social relations are eased by complimenting (" I do like your new car or congratulation").

The most common kinds of politeness formulas are involved with greetings. Greetings are basic oil of social relationship. Each social group has its own set of rules about who should be greeted, who should be greeted first and what's an appropriate form of greeting.

Through a natural " Good morning" to slowly disappearing formal "How do you do?" it's common to add a second part of greeting, a purely phatic "How are you" to which no replay is expected.

## 2.9 Politeness and Interaction

In much of the preceding discussion, the small-scale scenarios presented to illustrate language in use have been populated by people with virtually no social lives. Yet much of what we say, a great deal of what we communicate, is determined by our social relationships. A linguistic interaction is necessarily a social interaction.

Yule, (1996) stated that, in order to make sense of what we said in an interaction, we have to look at various factors which related to social distance and closeness. Some of the factors are established prior to an interaction and hence are largely external factors. They typically involve the relation status of the participants, based on social values tied to such things as age and power. For example, speakers who see themselves as lower status in English speaking context tend to mark social distance between themselves and higher status speakers by using address forms that include a title and last name, but not the first name (for example, Mr. Adams, Dr Dang). We take apart in a wide range of interactions (mostly with strangers) where the social distance is determined by external factors is dominant. However there are other factors, such as amount of imposition or degree of friendliness, which are often negotiated during an interaction. These are internal to interaction and can result in the initial social distance changing and being marked as less, or more, during its course. This may result, for example, in participant moving from a title-plus last name to a first – name basis within the talk. These internal factors are typically more relevant to participants whose social relationships are actually in the process of being worked out within the interaction. Both types of

factors, external and internal, have an influence not only on what we say, but also on how we are interpreted. In many cases, the interpretation goes beyond what we might have intended to convey and includes evaluations such as "rude" and "inconsiderate" or "considered" and "thoughtful". Recognizing the impact of such evaluations makes it very clear that more is being communicated than is said. The investigation of that impact is normally carried out in terms of politeness.

## **2.10 Perspectives on Politeness**

Fraser, (1975) points four main perspectives on the treatment of politeness: The social norm view, the conversational maxim view, the face saving view, the conversational contact view.

### **2.10.1 The social norm view**

The social norm view of politeness reflects the historical understanding of politeness, generally embraced by the public within the English-speaking world. Briefly stated, it assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe certain behavior, a state of affairs, or away of thinking in a context. A positive evaluation (politeness) arises when an action is congruence with the norm, a negative evaluation (impoliteness=rudeness) when action is to contrary. This normative view historically considers politeness to be associated with speech style. Whereby a higher degree of formality implies a greater politeness. Jespersen, (1965) suggests that the rule for using shall in the first and will in the other

person lies in English courtesy and modesty, and concludes that the speaker doesn't like ascribe future events to his own will, but is polite enough to speak of someone else's will decisive of the future.

### **2.10.2 The conversational- maxim view**

The view relies principally on the work of Grice, (1968) in his influential paper logic and conversation. In attempt to clarify how is that speakers can mean more than they say, He states his view in what is called Cooperative principle (c p), under which four categories of cooperative principle of maxims are distinguished:

The cooperative principle (c p)

Make your conversation contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchanges in which you are engaged.

1- Quantity: give the right amount of information: i.e.

- a. Make your contribution as informative as it required.
- b. Don't make your contribution more informative than it required.

2- Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true i.e.

- a. Don't say what you believe to be false.
- b. Don't say what you lack adequate evidence.

3- Relation: Be relevant

4- Manner: Be perspicuous: i.e.

- a. Avoid obscenity of expression.
- b. Avoid ambiguity.
- c. Be brief.
- e. Be order.

### **2.10.3 Face saving view**

The most influential approach to politeness is the face-saving view, elaborated by Brown and Levinson, (1978), revolving around three basic notions:

- The view of communication as rational activity, speakers are endowed with rationality, a precisely definable mode of reasoning.
- Grice's, (1968) cooperative principle and maxims of conversation.

According to the cooperative principle people operate on the assumption that ordinary conversation is characterized by no deviation from rational efficiency without a reason.

- Goffman's, (1967) notion of face –face is an image of the self delineated in term of approved social attributes. Brown and Leninson borrow the notion of face from Goffman and redefined it as public self-image that every member of a society wants to claim for himself.

Face is a crucial concept in pragmatic, science it capture all aspects of person's public image, being likely to unveil self-esteem in public sphere.

Every individual's feeling of self-worth or self- image can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others.

- One should normally try to avoid face-damaging situations, more precisely situations when a person's face risks revealing undesirable, socially unacceptable aspects, thus making the person in question feel embarrassed or uncomfortable.
- All individuals are said to constant invest in face preservation, and all actions taken to preserve one's face are generically called "face work".
- Face work comprises the multiplicity of the actions undertaken by a person in order to either preserve or save their face

#### **2.10.4 The conversational-contract view**

In this approach, when entering into a conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine what the participant can expect from the others. According to Fraser,(1975) These rights are based on parties, social relationships and during the process of interaction there is always the possibility for parties to renegotiate the initial rights and obligations on which the parties have agreed. The rights and obligations define the interlocutors, duty as a conversational contract (cc). Politeness here means operating within the terms and conditions of existing Conversational-Contract as long as the interlocutors respect the terms and rights agreed upon at the primary stages, they are interacting politely. Due to the possibility of negotiation and readjustment of terms

and rights, there is always the opportunity of negotiating the intention and behaving politely for the interlocutors. Accordingly, Fraser, (1975) regard politeness as "getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the CC". Conversational-contract view is similar to social norm view in that politeness involves conforming to socially agreed codes of good behavior. It is different from social norm view because in conversational-contract view the rights and negotiations are negotiable. Universal applicability is a remarkable feature of this model. Socio-cultures norms and patterns are the determinant factors in applying conversational-contract model of politeness. Kasper, (1990) believe that conversational- contract cannot be manifested regardless of members of "specific speech community". However, conversational – contract model as Thomas, (1995) reports it is not empirically applicable due to the lack of model details. Was, (1992) questions the terms and rights as is not clear what social of rights and terms. He also believes that the nature of the terms and rights are open to question.

## **Previous studies**

### **2.11 Previous studies**

Liu xiujun 2001

This researcher conducted his study at School of changwon national university in china, it was about, the differences of politeness phenomena between Chinese culture and western culture. The study stated that; first, politeness as a socio-cultural phenomenon is based on values and social norms of a particular community. Secondly, polite behavior is culturally specified. Thirdly politeness fulfills normative as well as instrumental functions in interaction. This study is similar to the current research in some aspects such as; politeness as social-cultural phenomena is extremely connected with social values and it is based on culture of a community. Therefore this is what the present study tends to investigate

### **2.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter the researcher stated the concept of politeness, its history, and then he has come over the perspectives on politeness. Also the researcher reviewed one of works on linguistic politeness as previous study. In the next chapter the researcher will discuss the methodology with which he conducted this research.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

# **Chapter Three**

## **Methodology**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter is about the research methodology, it highlights the methodology which the researcher adopts to collect the needed research data, population, sample, the tools of data collection, procedures which the researcher follows, and the validity, liability of the test as well.

### **3.1 Methodology**

The methodology which the researcher adopted to conduct this study was descriptive statistical analytical approach. Thus the researcher designed a test for collecting the needed research data.

### **3.2 Population**

The subject of this study is English students in general and students of Sudan University of Science and Technology- department of English in particular.

### **3.3 Sample**

As this study is carried out for the students of second year at Sudan University of Science and Technology par. Thirty students were chosen randomly to be tested, regardless of gender specification.

### **3.4 Tools**

- The researcher used a test as a tool to investigate the student's usage of English polite expressions particularly of greetings, requests and permissions. It contains three questions:
- The first question consists of five sub-questions, to test the student's usage of politeness in their greetings. And each sub-question has three options which are given to the students in order to circle the correct answers according to his/her own knowledge about linguistic politeness.
- The second question composes of five sub-questions to examine whether the students support the proposed ways of how one can soften his/ her speech to be more polite in English as a target language. Students have to put (T) for true and (F) for what they see is false.
- The third question contains three sub-questions to test the student's ability in expressing their requests and permissions politely in different forms to suit the social status of the receiver. Students had to tick the correct answers.

### **3.5 Procedure**

The data collection procedure is as follows:

After the test was designed, it was shown to the supervisor, and then it was distributed to the students. The researcher corrected the test and it

was administered by the researcher himself. The time of the test was 15 minutes.

### **3.6 Validity of The test:**

The test content and structure are considered to be valid, because they have been shown to the supervisor to judge the validity after the designation process. Besides the consultations of some experts who clarify the mystery and demonstrate what is already well formed. Eventually, the supervisor agreed on its final form. The test covered thoroughly all the topic areas under investigation.

### **3.7 The reliability of the test**

The researcher uses Statistical Package Social for Science to analysis the data to grantee the test reliability.

### **3.8 Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher described the methodology and the procedures that he followed to collect the potential data in order to tackle the research problem.

# **Chapter Four**

## **Data Analysis and Results Discussion**

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis and Results Discussion

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher takes on the analysis of the obtained data from students' test. The participants are 30 students undergo the test regardless to their gender specification as they have been chosen randomly.

#### 4.1 Data Analysis:

**Q1:** To what extent do students have shortage in using politeness in their greetings expressions?

In this question, students are asked to pick the most correct answer from different choices given to them.

Table (4.1)

Percentage of incorrect Ans.	Frequency of incorrect answers	Percentage of correct Ans.	Frequency of correct answers	Students' No.	Question No
40%	12	60%	18	30	1
30%	9	70%	21	30	2
50%	15	50%	15	30	3
20%	6	80%	24	30	4
36.7%	11	63.3%	19	30	5
<b>35.6%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>Total</b>

The above table shows the statistical results of the first question in students' test. There were 30 students who have answered the five sub-questions. As it can be seen in the table, 18 students answered the first sub-question "You met your teacher before you enter the class, which one of the following expression is ideal to greet him?" with percentage of 60% while the other 12 have failed to guess the right answer and the percentage was 40%. As it is noticed, students can easily figure out the correct answer. The question somehow hints at the expected answer as students normally greet each other with phrase 'Good morning'.

The chart below demonstrates that clearly.

In the second sub-question "When you meet someone for the first time, you could greet him by saying" 21 students have succeeded in guessing the correct answer with percentage of 70% while 9 failed to find the most correct answer with percentage of 30%. As the case in the first question, most of the students have found the correct answer, and that indicates their knowledge about greeting.

The third sub-question "feeling grateful of knowing very kind person you haven't met him before you could say:" shows students get half of the correct answer with percentage 50% while the other get 50% also. The researcher can notice that students were decided into two halves. To be fair enough, the question was somewhat tricky as there are some tight different points to distinguish the correct answer.

In the fourth question "Somebody said to you, How are you? Which one of the following is to be your best answer?", 24 students

have succeeded to figure out the most correct answer with percentage of 80% while only 6 students failed to guess the most right answer with associated percentage 20%.

This question is considered the easiest one for students to find the answer.

The last sub-question "You have spent a wonderful moment with someone at the restaurant, and you want to get back home, you can say:" 19 students have guessed the correct answer with percentage of 63.3% while 11 have failed to give the most correct answer and the percentage is 36.7%. This question is similar to the first question in term of right answers percentage.

**Q2:** How do students learn to adjust politeness in their speech with different social context that they talk to?

The question asks to choose either (True) of (False) to tell the right answer.



Table (4.2)

Percentage of incorrect Ans.	Frequency of incorrect answers	Percentage of correct Ans.	Frequency of correct answers	Students' No.	Question No
34%	10	66%	20	30	1
40%	12	60%	18	30	2
30%	9	70%	21	30	3
40%	12	60%	18	30	4
17%	5	83%	25	30	5
<b>32%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>Total</b>

The table shows the second question's results of the students' test. In the first sub-ques on 20 students have succeeded in guessing the correct answer with percentage of 66% while 10 failed to find the most correct answer with percentage of 34%. As it is no ced, most of the students have found the correct answer, and that indicates their knowledge about speaking politely.

In the second sub-ques on 18 students have succeeded in guessing the correct answer with percentage of 60% while 12 failed to find the most correct answer with percentage of 40%. As the case in the first question, most of the students have found the correct answer, and that indicates their knowledge about native culture.

In the third sub-ques on 21 students have succeeded in guessing the correct answer with percentage of 70% while 9 failed to find the most correct answer with percentage of 30%. As the case in the first question, most of the students have found the correct answer, and that indicates their knowledge about adopting native speaker's way to speaking.

In the fourth sub-ques on 18 students have succeeded in guessing the correct answer with percentage of 60% while 12 failed to find the most correct answer with percentage of 40%. As the case in the first question, most of the students have found the correct answer, and that indicates their knowledge about the effect of listener's position in speaker's way of speaking.

In the fifth sub-ques on 25 students have succeeded in guessing the correct answer with percentage of 83% while 5 failed to find the most correct answer with percentage of 17%. As the case in the first question, most of the students have found the correct answer, and that indicates their knowledge about greeting.

**Q3:** How far students are able to express their requests and permission with different language forms to meet the social status of receiver?

In this question, students are asked to tick the most correct answer from different choices given to them.

Table (4.3)

Percentage of incorrect Ans.	Frequency of incorrect answers	Percentage of correct Ans.	Frequency of correct answers	Students' No.	Question No
60%	18	40%	12	30	1
46.7%	14	53.3%	16	30	2
70%	21	30%	9	30	3
59%	53	41%	37	90	Total

The table above shows the statistical analysis results of the third question of students' test. The question consists of three sub-questions with three choices for each.

As it is shown in the table 12 students in the first sub-question have succeeded to find the correct answer with percentage of 40% while 18 failed to guess the right answer and the percentage was 60%. This is the first sub-question to see students get the lowest percentage so far. The confusion comes as students differ in picking the correct modal verb to begin a question politely; most of the students have chosen 'can' instead of 'may'.

The second question "To ask someone to open the door for you, you can say: " shows 16 students get the correct answer with percentage 53.3% while the other 14 get the incorrect answer. Only few percentages gap the two different answers. Unlike the first sub-question, more than half of the students have guessed the correct answer.

The last third question reveals students' most lowest percentage of correct answer so far as they get only 9 answers with percentage 30% while 21 get the correct answer with percentage 70%.

### **4.3 Overall Descriptive Result**

As it has been seen in the previous tables, students' answers have varied from correct to incorrect, but the overall result showed that students have slight problem which needs some help to be eliminated.

### **4.4 Hypotheses Discussion**

- There is a shortage of using politeness by the students, especially in their greetings.

According to the result of the first table in descriptive analysis, the total percentage (64.4%) of the correct answer indicates that most of the students have succeeded in finding the correct answer which in turn proves that students' haven't got problematic issue in using polite expressions of greetings. This proof refutes the first hypothesis claim. It can be said the problem is in the minimum level.

- Politeness is likely to be adjusted by students with the different contexts whom they talk to, through adaptation of Language forms and culture which are used by the native speakers of English.
- Looking at the third table of the descriptive analysis, it can be noticed that the majority of the students have well guessed the correct answer which can be seen in the overall percentage (68%).

The result is totally in agreement with the second hypothesis. The hypothesis totally is confirmed.

- Students are not able to express their requests and permission with different forms of language to suite the social status of the receiver.

The researcher can noticed that, the descriptive results have proved that students find difficulties in expressing requests and permission in different forms to meet the social status of the receiver. This result confirms the third hypothesis and agrees with it totally.

#### **4.5 Conduc on**

The chapter has analyzed the data obtained from students' test. The descriptive results were obtained, and charts were designed to represents the result tables.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

#### 5.0 Introduction:

In this chapter the researcher shows briefly, the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies

As this study tends to investigate the student's problem in using polite expressions of greetings, requests, and permissions. The researcher proposed the following questions to be answered:

- To what extent do students have shortage in using polite expressions of greetings?
- How do students learn to adjust politeness in speech with different social contexts that they talk to?
- How far are students able to express their requests and permissions in different forms to suit the social status of the receiver?

In order to find relevant answers for the above proposed questions, the researcher made the following hypotheses:

- Students have got shortage in using polite expressions of greetings.
- Politeness is likely to be adjusted by students through adoption of language forms and culture which are used by native speakers.

- Students are not able to express their requests and permission in different forms to suite the receiver.

### **5.1 Research findings**

According to the data analysis in the previous chapter the researcher has come out with the following findings:

- Students haven't got problem of using polite expressions of greetings.
- Students supported the proposed ways of adjusting the use of polite expressions.
- Students encounter problematic in expressing permissions and requests in different forms to meet the social status of the receiver.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Depending on the results of the study, the recommendations are as follow:

- There should be an English lab for the communication courses (audio-visual aids) to reflect the linguistic behaviors of the native speakers.
- Linguistic politeness courses should be taken into account from the lower university levels.



### **5.3 Suggestions for further studies**

As this research dealt with students' problems of using polite expressions, it investigated politeness in speech functions that express directives and phatic (social function). The researcher suggests the following for further studies:

- Politeness and other speech functions of language
- The gender differences in linguistic politeness usage.
- The effect of culture on linguistic politeness.
- Contrastive linguistic politeness between Arabic and English speakers.

## References

**Axia, G.** (1987). The development of social Pragmatics: A cross-national study of the case of linguistic politeness. Cambridge: MIT press.

**Brown, P.** and Levinson, S. (1978). Universal in language usage: Politeness phenomena, in Goody, E. (eds.), Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

**Ehrlich, K.** (1991). Politeness in Language: Berlin. BUL press.

Fraser, B. (1975). The concept of politeness: Paper presented at The NWAVE meeting. Georgetown University.

**Fuchs, M.,** Westheimer, M. And Bonner, M. (1949). Focus on Grammar: An Intermediate Course for Reference and Practice. Carbondale: Library of Congress press.

**Grice, P.** (1968). Utterance and Meaning: Danbury: Scholastic Library press.

**Grove, P.** (1976). Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

**Goffman, E.** (1967). Interactional Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior. New York: Doubleday.

**Jespersen, O.** (1965). A modern English Grammar: London : Allen University Press.

**Kasper, G.**(1990). Linguistic Politeness: Current Research Issues, Journal of Pragmatics 14, p. 193-218.

**Klein, L.** (1994). Shakesbury and the culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

**Leech, G.** (1983). The principles of Pragmatics: London: Longman.

**Lokoff, R.** (1972). Language in contexts, Language 48 (4), p. 907.

**Pearsall, J.**(1998) The new Oxford Dictionary of English . Oxford: Clarendon press.

**Richard, J. , Platt, J. and Weber, H.** (1985) .Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics. London: Longman.

**Spolsky, B.** (1998). Sociolinguistics: London: Oxford University press.

**Thomas, J.** (1995). Meaning in interaction . An introduction to pragmatics. London and New York: Longman.

**Watts, R.** (1992). Linguistic politeness and polite verbal behavior : Berlin: Mouton.

**Wordhaugh, R.**(2003) An introduction to Sociolinguistics. Oxford: Black well publisher.

## **Appendices**

## Appendix (1)

### Test

**Sudan University of Science and Technology**

College of Graduate Studies

**College of Languages**

Department of English

I would be very grateful if you could help me in carrying out this research, by giving me your time and effort to answer this brief test. The research is about investigating politeness in Students' speech. Knowing that your cooperation is a great support to the researcher particularly and to the knowledge as general. Please do not worry about the confidentiality of your responses to this test.

Please answer all the following questions:

#### **Q.1:**

**Please put a circle in the correct answer.**

a. You met your teacher before you enter the class, which one of the following expressions is ideal to greet him?

1. Hello Dr, how are you doing?
2. Good morning Dr, how are you today?
3. Hi Dr, how is it going?

b. When you meet someone for first time, you could greet him by saying:

1. How do you do?
2. How are you?
3. How are things?

c. Feeling grateful of knowing very kind person you haven met him before you could say:

1. It's nice to see you.
2. It's nice to meet you.
3. It's nice to talk to you.

d. Somebody said to you, How are you? Which one of the following is to be your best answer?

1. I'm not too bad thanks.

2. I'm fine thank you
3. I'm just great thanks.
- e. You have spent a wonderful moment with someone at the restaurant, and you want get back home, you can say:
  1. Bye for now.
  2. Bye
  3. Good bye.

### Q.2

#### 1- Please tick the correct answer.

. It is more polite to ask someone who you don't know for permission to do something is to say;

- a. can I ask a question please . (    )
- b. could I ask a question please. (    )
- c. may I ask a question please. (    )

2. To ask your classmate to open the door for you, you can say;

- a. could you open the door please. (    )
- b. could you mind opening the door please.(    )
- c. can you open the door please. (    )

3. you have an appointment to see the doctor, and you want to ask your teacher not to attend the class.

- a. I wonder if I might leave a bit earlier today. I have got a doctor's appointment. (    )
- b. Would I be able to leave a bit earlier? I have got a doctor's appointment (    )
- c. Would it be ok if I left a bit earlier? I have got a doctor's appointment (    )

### Q.3

#### Please put (T) for true and (F) for false.

1. To speak politely is to be familiar with certain forms and expressions which are used by native speakers of a language (    )
2. adopting the culture of the native speakers of a language enhance your speech politeness (    )
3. You can make your speech more polite by observing the way which is used by the native speakers (    )
4. The position of the person who you talk to enforce you to use certain language form (    )
5. The way you talk to your Teacher differs from the way you talk to your colleague (    )