

**How to Cite:**

Furkatovna, S. A., Jurabekovna, T. M., & Mamurjonovna, T. P. (2021). Gender aspects of politeness strategy in speech acts. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S2), 1488-1496.  
<https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5nS2.1962>

## Gender Aspects of Politeness Strategy in Speech Acts

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**Abstract**---Quite important for scientists is the question of the place of gender characteristics in the choice of linguistic means, as well as the reflection in the language of stereotypes associated with gender. Each person has his own style of communication, which depends on upbringing, education, age, social status, and gender. In general, men and women speak differently, although each person has a different level of gender speech characteristics.

**Keywords**---expressive speech acts, gender, locution, negative politeness, politeness strategy, positive politeness, sociolinguistics.

### Introduction

In recent years, politeness issue has become quite common in language and gender studies. This interest arises in connection with the statement of R. Lakoff that women are linguistically more polite than men. The same conclusions were made by P. Brown and J. Holmes on the basis of the observations. It used to be that women loved to talk and perceived conversation as a way to maintain relationships especially with friends and family. They use language to establish and develop personal relationships. Men, on the other hand, view language as a means of receiving and transmitting information. For them, a conversation is a means of achieving a certain result: some information is received or a problem is solved (Holmes, 2013).

## Method

Furthermore, many linguists believe that women are more polite than men, as they are more focused on the emotional rather than on the informational aspect of communication. Politeness is an expression of concern for the feelings of others [O'Wair, 4]. Apologizing for an intrusion, opening a door for someone, inviting a new neighbor for a cup of tea, using courtesies such as "Señor", "Señora" and refusing to swear in conversation can all be seen as examples of politeness.

*"Buenas noches. Señora Embajadora. Es tan amable de venir".*

*"Es tan amable de invitarme". María dijo*

*"Permítame que lo lleve al embajador" (Vázquez, 304).*

En este ejemplo, los interlocutores intercambian frases amables para mostrar su actitud hacia los demás. In daily use, the term "politeness" describes formal and distant behavior in which the speaker does not seek to impose anything on the interlocutor or invade his territory. Being polite means showing respect for the interlocutor (Holmes, 2013). J. Holmes shares the opinion of P. Brown and S. Levinson and defines politeness, firstly, as behavior that implies positive concern for others, and secondly, distant behavior. In other words, politeness can express goodwill or camaraderie. A.F. Shamahmudova believes "that language learning should pay attention to these differences and possible pragmatic errors, especially when there is a risk of cultural misunderstanding or evaluating other unfamiliar factors with the help of prejudices. For this, the communicants should be offered clear, pragmatic detailed information detailing the contexts of using the most important speech acts and the means of expression most appropriate to these contexts" All languages have a set of means by which a person can emphasize the power of his speech act to form "positive" politeness, or, conversely, soften it to express "negative" politeness. In English, for example, modal auxiliary verbs "may", "might" and "could" and modal words "perhaps", "possibly", "maybe" can be used by the speaker as delimiting forms and thus function as strategies "Negative" politeness. According to J. Holmes, this occurs when modal means are used to express emotional meaning, implying participation in the desires of another person and, therefore, are markers of expression of the category of politeness (Holmes, 1984).

## Discussion

Currently, the tendency to consider men and women as equal is more common, however, there is a certain difference in the use of language means by heterosexual participants in communication, and the main reasons for this are innate biological differences, socialization processes, and uneven distribution of power in society. Traditional upbringing and socialization of people have changed, as a result of this, some concepts of gender have also changed. In the XX century, due to industrial and technological progress, there is a convergence of the moral norms of behavior of men and women. Industrialization has leveled the functional significance of sex differences. A woman gets some social freedom and the opportunity to feel like a member of society like a man, begins to claim her own social role in it, giving up the function of a passive observer. This is largely due to socio-cultural modifications, changes in the upbringing of children. The actual gender differences are relatively small, as in most behaviors, men and women

have more similarities than differences. Indeed, biological differences between men and women do not at all imply significant gender differences, and traditional gender roles today are not able to fully meet the needs of society (Lavrienko, 2006).

However, "gender stereotypes" are still present in the mind of a person, leading to the fact that he perceives the representatives of the opposite sex as completely different from him (Arroyo, 1994; Escandell Vidal, 1993). These gender attitudes often act as social norms, following which a person can receive social approval or avoid social disapproval. However, at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, strict social rules begin to change, and as a result, they take on different forms and some gender attitudes. Men and women are becoming more and more equal in education and work. Thus, the concept of "masculinity" no longer conjures up the image of a tough guy who works all day and leaves the upbringing of children to a woman. Today, quite often we are faced with just the opposite. Men take care of children and do housework, they are more open and do not hide their feelings. Women, on the other hand, can work in almost any professional field and occupy positions equal to those of men. Language helps people to express their identity and their sexual characteristics, therefore, with the changes in ideas about "masculinity" and "femininity", the language of cultural representatives is also transformed (Ryabova, 2015; Jansen & Janssen, 2010; Swann & Deumert, 2018).

What was previously considered a "feminine language" (as defined by R. Lakoff) is beginning to take on a different form. The boundaries in the sharp dividing line between the use of language means by men and women are blurring. The division begins to be drawn between the imperious and powerless language inherent in heterosexual representatives of society, depending on the situation (O'Barr & Atkins, 1980). The desire of women to take an equal position with the opposite sex and to succeed in areas previously completely owned by men leads to the fact that their behavior changes and is often viewed as impolite, unusual for them. Women strive for simplicity of expression, are more straightforward in expressing their thoughts. Thus, the rules of speech etiquette change, transformations take place in the choice of linguistic forms and structures of expression of the category of politeness (Mayer et al., 2006; Hobjilã, 2012).

Softening words and phrases are used in speech in order to express uncertainty about the correctness of the statement, respect for the opinion of the interlocutor, or, conversely, a certain degree of involvement, separation of his point of view (Goroshko, 2006; Furkatovna & Mekhrojevna, 2021). Softening words and phrases are found quite often in the speech of heterosexual representatives of communicative cultures. These include modal auxiliary verbs, modal words, verbs expressing doubt, confidence, involvement, lexical delimiters, clauses with the conjunction "that". In the 80s, linguists P. Brown, F. Crosby, L. Nyquist made interesting observations in the study of modality. It was noted that women more often use modal verbs in the past tense, introductory words and phrases expressing varying degrees of speaker's confidence, as well as references to their own or any other opinion.

- *"Gracias por venir", dijo en su cara. "He estado esperando durante cuatro horas. No sabía de otra forma de encontrarte.  
"Antonio asintió y sonrió como si dijera: "Está bien. Hiciste lo correcto."  
"¿Qué pasa?" dijo.  
"Tenemos que hablar, pero no aquí. "  
"¿Dónde sugieres?"  
"¿Podríamos dar una vuelta?"  
"Claro, pero no en mi coche. Puede que no sea una buena idea."  
"Tengo un coche. Es viejo, pero lo haré " (Vázquez, 212).*

However, analysis of modern fiction shows that there is no significant difference in the use of such markers of expression of the category of politeness by men and women. The percentage of using modal verbs in masculine speech is approximately 51.16%, in feminine - 46.3%, as for modal words, they are more common in masculine speech (60.7%). This is due to the desire of men not to hurt the feelings of a person, to soften their utterance and to achieve the set communicative goal, which may turn out to be impossible with the direct design of the utterance.

- *"Me gustaría hablar sobre el accidente", dijo Antonio.  
"Puedes preguntar. Puede que no responda."  
"¿Qué causó la explosión?"  
"No lo sé. Quizás un compresor de aire. Quizás algo de combustible. No estamos seguros". (Vázquez, 165).*

From example (2) it is clear that the man would not like to draw precise conclusions, he is not sure of his statement and therefore softens his assumptions with the word " quizás " .

- *Nuestro camarero nos estaba observando de cerca. Y cuando me levanté, en mis caderas, y expresé con mi postura total desconcierto y negativa a buscar más, él se acercó y con un fuerte y agradable acento georgiano preguntó:  
Le pido perdón, probablemente olvidó el número en el baño. Fue enviado al armario.  
¡No te preocupes por favor!  
Yo estaba muy enojado. Vio cómo estábamos buscando algo durante cinco minutos.  
¡¿No pudiste venir antes y decir?! ...  
Volvíamos a sentarnos a terminar nuestro café y nos trajeron la cuenta (Vázquez, 11).*

In example (3), the waiter doubts who exactly lost the number, so he uses the word "quizás" in order not to hurt the feelings of the person he is addressing in case of a mistake. The use of modal words and verbs in the speech of men and women serves mainly one function - to soften the impact of their speech act on the interlocutor (Attardo, 1997; Ariel, 1984). Other differences in the use of softening techniques between women and men in English include the use of means such as "sabemos que" and "es que". The solidarity marker " sabemos que " (used primarily in the speech of people who know each other well) can be used as a target-oriented technique of "positive" politeness, or in a reference meaning when it refers to supposed public knowledge, or acts as an evasive expression in relation to the validity of the assumption. In general, women use this marker of solidarity more often than men (64% of the total number of analyzed statements

containing this marker), not wanting to give up their turn to speak, or expressing solidarity with the interlocutor, softening the reported information.

- *Vivian y Jose compartieron la suite principal durante dos semanas, hasta que una mañana Vivian dijo: "Te amo, Jose, pero sabemos que roncas" Jose no lo sabía. "Realmente debo dormir solo, amor. No te importa, ¿verdad?" "Por supuesto que lo entiendo, cariño" (Vázquez, 89).*

In example (4), Vivian uses the "sabemos que " marker to soften her rather harsh remark about her beloved. Men use "sabes que" taken of politeness in order to emphasize the knowledge of the transmitted information or to soften the advice, request or other speech act that could harm the interlocutor.

- *Paige tuvo una idea. "Es un día tan hermoso, ¿por qué no vamos a Tree Park? Podemos preparar un almuerzo campestre y comer al aire libre". "Eso suena amoroso." Dijo Honey. "¡Vamos a hacerlo!" Kat estuvo de acuerdo (Vázquez, 150).*
- *"Me gusta tu vestido. Me parece adorable" (Vázquez, 138).*

Men focus on personal independence and their social status and therefore may misjudge and misunderstand a compliment, which will create an awkward communication situation.

- *Harry Bowman se detuvo junto a ellos en el Ferrari rojo. "Es un auto hermoso". Dijo Honey. "¿Cuánto cuesta uno de esos?" Bowman se rió. "Si tienes que pedirlo, no te lo puedes permitir" (Vázquez, 157).*

This does not mean that men avoid such speech acts, the only difference is that they compliment if they are struck by something, thereby approving the behavior or appearance of the interlocutor.

- *"Bonita camisa. Tarrance". Dijo Mitch sin disimular diversión. "Gracias. Tienes que ser un verdadero ganador". "Bonito bronceado también". "Sí, sí. Tengo que mirar la parte, ya sabes" (Vázquez, 307).*
- *Eres conservador, Drongo, lo que significa que estás comprometido con unos valores específicos. Toda Europa sabe que solo usas zapatos Balli, prefieres los trajes de Valentina. Tiene un gusto estricto, Sr. Drongo. No puedo devolverle el cumplido (Vázquez, 38).*

However, there are exceptions when the act of compliment is dictated by the speaker's specific goals. When designing her speech act, a woman must necessarily take into account the negative attitude of men to compliments if she really wants to strengthen or establish contact. In Spanish communication culture, an apology accompanies any action aimed at redressing a threatening speech act. The phrase "apenado" and even more so the word "perdon" do not carry the pragmatic value that the English phrases "excuse me" and "excuse me please" have. The same goes for words of gratitude. The Spanish are grateful for any insignificant action, thereby expressing their independence and unwillingness to interfere, influence the interlocutor or be due to him. In some communication

culture, expressing gratitude is usually accepted for providing a significant service (Payne, 2004; Shannon et al., 2019).

Previously, it was believed that women apologize more often than men, thereby showing their subordinate position, their insecurity. Having considered a number of examples taken from contemporary fiction, one can come to the following conclusions. Women use the markers of apology "perdone", "lo siento", less often than men. The number of use of these markers of the category of politeness in female speech is 40.9%, while in male – 59.

- 10. *"¿Por qué no has llamado?" preguntó, fríamente, pero con un ligero toque de preocupación.*  
*"Lo siento. Me quedé dormido. ¿Qué hora es?" Se frotó los ojos y se centró en su reloj.*  
*"Once. Desearía que llamaras."*  
*"Llamé. Nadie respondió."*  
*"¿Cuándo?"*  
*"Entre las ocho y las nueve. ¿Dónde estabas?"*  
*Ella no respondió. Ella esperó. "¿Vienes a casa?"*  
*"No. Necesito trabajar toda la noche ..."*  
*—Esperaba que estuvieras en casa, Mitch. Y al menos podrías haber hecho una llamada. La cena todavía está en la estufa.*  
*"Lo siento. Estoy metido hasta las orejas en los plazos y perdí la noción del tiempo. Pido disculpas" (Vázquez, 92).*

The gratitude markers "gracias", "agradezco" are more typical for female speech (58% of the total number of speech acts containing gratitude markers).

11. *"Eres muy comprensivo", respondió Olive, picando una ensalada ligera. Ella vaciló un momento y luego dijo: "Espero que no te importe que te diga esto, pero en realidad tu peinado podría mejorarse y estaría dispuesta a llevarte a mi peluquero, eso es si quieres", dijo, añadió apresuradamente, ansioso por no ofender.*

- *"Gracias. Me gusta así", dijo Lucky rápidamente, tocando automáticamente la espantosa peluca.*  
*"Oh. No quiero decir que no sea muy lindo. Es muy lindo", dijo Olive, obviamente nerviosa y mintiendo lo mejor que podía (Vázquez, 122).*

From the speech of characters in prose, it can be seen that women use gratitude markers and apology markers less often than men (apology markers make up 36% of the total number of speech acts containing these markers, gratitude markers - 37%).

- *Puedo hablar contigo?*  
*"Puedes", murmuró y se alejó avergonzada.*  
*Gracias. – Jose Maria sonrió, - dime, ¿ya conociste a un abogado? ¿Te dijo el precio?*  
*-Sí (Vázquez, 163).*
- *Susana, perdón, ábrela un minuto.*  
*Qué pasa?*  
*Abre, no puedo gritar? - respondió Jaime desde detrás de la puerta.*  
*Perdón. Jaime, pero ya estoy dormido.*

*Estoy solo un minuto, esto es muy importante. Lo siento de nuevo. - Jaime entró en la habitación. (Vázquez, 253).*

Requests with the marker "por favor" are more common among men than among women (the number of uses of this marker in male speech is 52%, in female - 47.6%); by doing so, they try to mitigate the threatening act contained in the speech act of the request.

- *Jesus dijo rápidamente: "Sugiero que vayamos a la biblioteca". Se volvió hacia George. "¿Podrías enviar a la jovencita allí, por favor?" "Sí, señor" (Vázquez, 155).*
- *En el otro extremo del cable, las lágrimas fluían como un río. Maria sollozó en el auricular. Y aquí, junto a Jesus Gallego, Maria estaba vertiendo valocordin en un vaso de ella misma, agitando una burbuja oscura como si él tuviera la culpa de todo. Gracias, Maria. Cálmate y por favor. No salgas de casa por ningún lado. Estaré en tu casa en media hora, (Vázquez, 154).*

At the same time, polite constructions with markers "lo agradezco ...", "lo ap" and others are more common in the speech of men, especially when talking with women (in percentage terms, their use is 70%).

- *"Yo [el Dr. Desforses] se preguntaba si le gustaría cenar conmigo una noche, pero sé lo ocupado que debe estar y ...". "Me encantaría", dijo Mary rápidamente. "En realidad?" "De verdad" (Vázquez, 316).*

Thus, one cannot simply attribute certain characteristics to the speech of men and women. Gender research is a fairly new direction in the humanities, but in modern linguistics it is only now entering the process of formation. In the center of his attention are cultural and social factors that predetermine the attitude of society towards men and women, human behavior in connection with his belonging to one or another sex, stereotypical judgments about male and female qualities, etc. Masculinity and femininity are thus viewed not as a permanent natural factor, but as concepts of culture (Carretero et al., 2015; Ogiermann & Bella, 2021).

## **Conclusion**

In recent years, the topic of politeness has received its consideration in gender studies. This is due to the fact that at the beginning of the 20th century, many linguists (R. Lakoff, P. Brown, J. Holmes and others) argued that women are linguistically more polite than men. Various explanations were given for this: innate biological differences, differences in psychological orientation and temperament (J. Gray, A. Buffery), ways and means of social upbringing and education of boys and girls (D. Maitz, D. Tannen), different distribution of power in society. All this led to the formation of stereotypes about the existence of more polite female language than male. Differences in the use of politeness structures in speech were explained, as a rule, by the subordinate social position of women, which led to a feeling of social insecurity. As a result, it was generally accepted

that women should be more polite than men in power (Jafarova, 2021; Syafruddin et al., 2021).

Recently, there have been significant changes in the distribution of social roles between men and women. Women are now viewed not only as wives raising children, they are working and occupying leadership positions. In this regard, their behavior and speech patterns also change (Ino et al., 2017; Nasution, 2016). The qualities that were previously attributed to feminine speech are now characteristic of masculine speech. In turn, female speech acquires some characteristics of the male communication style. The classification of situations according to the degree of politeness has practically not changed. In situations requiring a high degree of politeness, the level of courtesy increased even more. And impolite forms in appropriate situations began to be used even more often, regardless of the gender of the interlocutors (Vocroix, 2021; Suryasa, 2019).

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