

Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Toward the Implementation of the Politeness Principle in Classroom Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Politeness is considered to promote effective interaction between people. In the process of language teaching and learning, it is believed to enhance learning by providing a lively and friendly atmosphere in the classroom (Jiang, 2010). During classroom periods, including class policy, activities, and techniques, a teacher's language plays a critical role; it also plays an important role while giving academic instructions, motivating the class, and during the evaluation of a student's performance and participation. This paper approaches classroom interaction from a pragmatic perspective by adopting Leech's politeness principle and maxims. It aims to answer the following 2 questions: first, "what are the teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of the politeness principle during classroom interactions?" and second, "what are the students' attitudes toward the implementation of the politeness principle during classroom interactions?" To achieve the aims of this study by finding answers to the questions, the researcher prepared 2 sets of questionnaires: 1 for the teachers in the English Department and 1 for the fourth year students in the same department at the College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil, Erbil, Iraq, for the academic year of 2018 to 2019. By analyzing the data collected, it was found that both the teachers and students have positive attitudes toward the politeness maxims and the implementation thereof during classroom interactions; furthermore, there was agreement between the teachers' and students' responses to the questionnaires for most of the politeness maxims except in 3 cases, which were for the maxims of sympathy, obligation (S to O), and feeling reticence.

Keywords: Politeness principle, Leech's politeness maxims, Classroom interaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is used for communication to convey one's intention to others in different social interactions. In conveying intention, people use strategies in their communication as part of the language user's communicative competence. To do so, language learners need to be equipped with proper

communicative competence to achieve successful communication among users and native speakers of the target language. Communicative competence involves both language competence and pragmatic competence. The former includes vocabulary, pronunciation, word formation, spelling, and sentence structure, whereas the latter refers to the practical use of the language and choosing the proper utterances in the given situation. Pragmatics is involved in the communicative competence of a speaker. Thus, it deals with different aspects of everyday communication with politeness being one of these. The politeness principle is very important to investigate because it is used by people in their social interactions and in specific contexts and forms the basis

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for knowing what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and how to be with other people (Yule, 1996).

This paper aimed to answer the following 2 questions: first, “what are the teachers’ attitudes toward the implementation of the politeness principle during classroom interactions?” and second, “what are the students’ attitude toward the implementation of the politeness principle during classroom interactions?” This research study used a combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods by using a questionnaire as the tool to collect the data. The participants were teachers in the English Department of the College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil, Erbil, Iraq, and fourth year students in the same department, college, and university for the academic year of 2018 and 2019. The questionnaires were based on the application of Leech’s politeness maxims, which include the tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, sympathy, obligation, opinion reticence, and feeling reticence maxim.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this section, information about classroom interaction, theories of politeness in general, and Leech’s politeness maxims in particular are reviewed. Moreover, some information concerning the relationship between politeness and classroom interaction are given.

2.1. Classroom interaction

Interaction is the “heart of communication” (Brown, 2007) through which thoughts, ideas, feelings, knowledge, etc. are exchanged, for example, the way we send and receive messages, interpret, decode, and comprehend them in order to achieve certain aims and objectives. Accordingly, Brown (2007) regards interaction as “the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between 2 or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other.”

The classroom is the place where the interaction process happens between the teacher and students on the one hand, and among students themselves on the other hand. The Interaction hypothesis explains that the position that promotes the development of proficiency in a second or foreign language is the process of face-to-face linguistic interaction, not merely the exposure to input. In the

classroom, if the interaction runs smoothly, the knowledge that will be delivered by the teacher will be received well by the students.

There are 2 forms of the Interaction hypothesis: the first 1 is called the strong form, in which the linguistic development occurs in the interactional process itself, whereas the weak form of this hypothesis proposes that interaction, although important, is better seen as a process in which learning opportunities are made available to learners who may or may not make productive use of them (Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

A language classroom can be seen as a sociolinguistic environment and discourse between communities during which participants use different functions of language to establish a communication system in which the teacher-student interaction is believed to contribute to the students’ language development (Consolo, 2006). Therefore, classroom interaction is similar to any other social relationship in which the interlocutors have to work hard to promote effective communication. Classroom interactions with awareness about the pragmatic aspect as well as the knowledge of politeness are important for teaching a foreign language.

Mugford (2011) stated that various characteristics of students can be altered through classroom interactions. Therefore, a good classroom interaction is necessary for both the teacher and student. A good interaction has the ability to develop the abilities of students in both an academic and a nonacademic sense. It is because inside the classroom, a teacher does not only provide subject materials but also shares moral values that will benefit students outside the classroom. For teachers, a good interaction enables them to build a positive relationship with their students so that the gap between them can be bridged by good communication skills. Thus, carrying out effective communication in the classroom is very important and cannot be underestimated.

2.2. Theories of politeness

Politeness is universal and is best expressed as the practical application of good manners or etiquette. Thus, it is one type of social action that people look for in practice in their interactions to reach comity.

In this regard, Watt (2003) defined politeness as the ability to please others through external actions. Moreover, Foley (1997) referred to politeness as “a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure that everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction.” Moreover, Yule (2006) defined politeness as a way of showing awareness of and consideration for another person’s face (where face in pragmatics is the public self-image).

Politeness strategies are more likely to be used when a speaker of relatively low power makes a larger request to a more distant relation than when a speaker of relatively high power makes a smaller request to a closer relation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Politeness strategies are ways to convey the speech acts as polite as possible. To achieve that, there are some strategies that can be applied in specific context and that can be used by individuals in certain societies.

There are various scholars who focused on politeness in their studies and proposed different theories through which their names were connected with linguistic politeness, such as Robin Lakoff, Geoffrey Leech, Brown and Levinson, and Watts, who are regarded as the most influential and well known scholars in this area in addition to Elen, Fraser, and Nolan. These theories are reviewed in this paper, but the main focus is on Leech’s politeness principle (the updated 10 maxims) on which the practical framework is based.

Robin T. Lakoff, called “the mother of modern politeness,” began the modern study of politeness from pragmatic rules (Leech, 2014) in her article entitled “The logic of politeness” in 1973. Thus, she is the first linguistic theorist to posit the need for a politeness principle. Her work influenced later researchers whose work then expanded on and superseded her work. Lakoff defined politeness as “forms of behavior that have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction” (Watts, 2003). Furthermore, Lakoff suggested the following 2 rules and sub rules for pragmatic competence: rule (1) is to be clear and rule (2) is to be polite. The first rule is the Gricean “Cooperative Principle” (CP), which she renamed as the “rules of conversation.” The second rule consists of the following 3 sub rules: (1) “do not impose,” (2) “give options,” and (3) “make addressee feel good – be friendly”(Watts,

2003). Therefore, she suggested that the participants in a conversation must try to keep the balance among these 3 maxims because the violation of 1 of them leads to an inappropriate or impolite interaction.

In addition, the model of Brown and Levinson (1978 and 1987) is regarded as one of the most influential models and has been applied in different fields to study the politeness phenomena. Their theory is viewed and analyzed in their book entitled “Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage” over 2 editions in 1978 and 1987. The main concept on which their theory is based is the concept of “face,” which was introduced by Ervin Goffman to refer to the public image of a self and that one has to be aware of what another’s face wants during an interaction. The core of their theory is the notion of face-saving acts. Furthermore, the framework of their model involves using different strategies to summarize human politeness behavior, for example, as positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record and off record, or indirect strategy as well as other subdivisions.

Subsequently, Geoffrey Leech (1983) proposed a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges through a set of 6 maxims, but he then revised and updated them in 2014 to 10 maxims and introduced these as a “General Strategy of Politeness” as a way to explain how politeness operates in conversational exchanges (Leech, 2014). These maxims and their uses are the main focus of this paper, and the details of this theory are explained below.

The criticizing and researching of politeness by different researchers in different fields of life have encouraged researchers to take a look at new perspectives on politeness such as was done by Watts (2003) and Locher (2004). They described politeness in 2 ways, namely *Politeness 1* and *Politeness 2*. The former is the “lay or folk linguistics” (LoCastro, 2012), which involve the practical aspects of language use including etiquette, which is what is considered to be polite by most people. In contrast, the latter involves the theoretical concepts involved in a language including the different strategies found to have a successful and polite interaction, such as those outlined in Brown and Levinson’s model. Finally, LoCastro (2012) concludes Watts’ view by stating that for the purpose of building a strong, inclusive theory of

politeness, “researchers need, first of all, to study what happens in everyday interactions to learn not only how politeness is shown, but also how the participants react to and interpret it;” that is to say, it would be better if researchers study or investigate *Politeness 1* and then move to build up strategies and modules for *Politeness 2* rather than the other way round.

2.2.1. Leech (1983 and 2014)

The politeness principle proposed by Geoffrey Leech is applied, in this paper, to observe the case of classroom interaction between teachers and their students. There are researchers who investigated the implementation of politeness phenomena in the classroom or in other fields of life, such as Agustina and Cahyono’s work (2016) entitled “Politeness and Power Relation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom Interactions: A Study on Indonesian Learners and Lecturers,” Wanli and Aihong’s (2000) work entitled “An Investigation and Analysis of Politeness Strategies Employed in College English Teachers’ Classroom Feedback,” Sulu’s (2015) study entitled ‘Teacher’s Politeness in EFL Class,’ and the Diploma thesis by Subertova (2013) entitled “Aspects of Politeness in a classroom of English as a Second Language.” All of the above-mentioned studies focused mainly on investigating, observing, and/or analyzing politeness in classroom interactions with different aims and procedures. What makes this paper different from others is that it measured the teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward the politeness principle in classroom interactions according to the General Strategies of Politeness proposed by Leech, which involves 10 politeness maxims instead of the previous 6 maxims on which the previous analyses were based. Furthermore, most of the previous studies on politeness have applied Brown and Levinson’s theory as a module for analysis.

In 1983, Geoffrey Leech published his “Principles of Pragmatics” in London, offering his landmark model on the politeness principle, which has been regarded as the most appropriate for practical situations. The politeness principle, like the cooperative principle and irony principle, is regarded as a part of the interpersonal rhetoric. In describing Leech’s model of politeness, Archer et al. (2012) stated that this model is based on “the assumption that interlocutors seek to minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize the expression of polite beliefs” via some maxims. It was

categorized and introduced in the form of 6 maxims but, later on in 2014, Leech published his work entitled “The Pragmatics of Politeness” in the United States in which he revised and updated the politeness maxims and reformulated and increased them into 10 maxims, which include the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, sympathy maxim, obligation (of speaker [S] to other [O]) maxim, obligation (of O to S) maxim, opinion reticence maxim, and feeling reticence maxim.

Leech defines politeness as forms of behavior that establish and maintain feelings of comity within a social group; that is, the ability of the participants in a social interaction to engage in an atmosphere of relative harmony. It can be expressed by certain polite formulaic utterances such as *please, thank you, excuse me, sorry*, etc. According to Leech, the politeness principle involves 2 participants in conversation, which are *self* and *other*. The *self* conventionally represents the speaker, whereas *other* refers to the hearer or the addressee. The concept of *other* also refers to a third party. The speaker must also show his or her politeness to a third party, whether present or not.

Leech (1983) set up 3 pragmatic scales. The cost-benefit scale deals with the cost or benefit that an action will have for the hearer: the higher the cost to the hearer, the less polite the illocutionary act is, and the lower the cost (or the higher the benefit), the more polite the illocutionary act is. The indirectness scale has to do with the degree of indirectness of an act with regard to its illocutionary goal. Leech (1983) asserted that indirectness gives rise to optionality and, at the same time, minimizes the impositive force of the illocution. Therefore, the more indirect a stance is, the more polite a speech is. However, this is not categorical and that is why the concept of optionality is needed. The optionality scale accounts for the choice given to the hearer to refuse, described by Leech (1983) as “... it becomes progressively easier for [the hearer] to say no ... negative politeness (i.e., serving the avoidance of the cost to [the hearer]) is increased.” The 3 scales are interrelated, i.e., the higher the cost, the more indirect the utterance will be and the greater the amount of optionality to the addressee. These scales underlie all the maxims of politeness.

The maxims that Leech (1983) postulated were influenced by the distinction he drew between negative and positive politeness. Negative politeness consists of minimizing impoliteness while positive politeness involves maximizing politeness. This leads to a dual vision for the 6 maxims. He also asserted that speech acts can be either *other*-centered or *self*-centered, and are thus bilateral, which is seen in the tact and generosity maxims as well as in the case of approbation and modesty (Leech, 1983).

(1) Tact maxim

“Give a low value to S’s want.” (Leech, 2014)

“Minimize cost to other. Maximize benefit to other.” (Leech, 1983)

Tact is the first maxim of the politeness principle and the most important kind of politeness in the English-speaking society. The speaker tries to be tactful in communication by minimizing the expression of beliefs that imply cost to other and maximizing the expression of beliefs that imply benefit to others. This maxim is implemented using directive (impositive or competitive illocutions and commissive utterances). The directive or impositive utterance is a form of utterance mainly used to show a command such as ordering, commanding, requesting, advising, and recommending in addition to invitation, which is either direct or indirect. Meanwhile, the commissive utterance is the utterance that functions to declare a promise or offer something.

Examples:

Would you mind having another sandwich?

Can you answer the phone?

Could I interrupt you for a minute to help me?

Please take your clothes, I have washed for you.

(2) Generosity maxim

“Give a high value to O’s wants.” (Leech, 2014)

“Minimize benefit to self: maximize cost to self.” (Leech, 1983)

The intent of this maxim, generosity, is to make the advantages to *self* as small as possible. The generosity maxim requires the participants to minimize the benefit to *self* and maximize cost to *self*. This maxim is like the tact maxim in that it can be expressed by the directive, impositive, and commissive utterances. However, it is different in that the generosity maxim is *self*-centered, while the tact maxim is *other*-centered.

Examples:

Could I borrow this electric drill?

I wouldn’t mind a cup of coffee.

You could borrow my bicycle, if you like.

In the maxim of charity or generosity, the focus is on *others* where they should be put first instead of on *self* in a way that respect for others will happen if one can reduce profits to *self* and maximize profits to *others*.

Example:

(A) *Let me wash your clothes too. I just have the same thing to be washed, really.*

(B) *No, Mom. I will wash them later today.*

From the speech delivered above, it can be clearly noted that the speaker is trying to maximize profits by adding cost to himself/herself.

(3) Approbation maxim

“Give a high value to O’s qualities.”(Leech, 2014)

“Minimize dispraise of other: maximize praise of other.” (Leech, 1983)

This maxim requires the speaker to avoid everything that hurts *other*, especially the addressee, described by Leech (1983) as “avoid saying unpleasant things about others, and more particularly about [the hearer].” This maxim is expressed using expressive and assertive utterances. The function of the expressive utterance is to express the speaker’s psychological attitude toward a situation. This utterance can usually be found in some utterances to express thankfulness, congratulation, welcoming, blaming, condoling, apologizing, praising, etc. The

assertive utterance is commonly used to declare the truth proposition (Leech, 1983). It can usually be found if someone expresses his opinion, a comment, suggestion, complaint, claim, report, etc.

Examples:

What a marvelous meal you cooked!

I heard your English just now. You are good in English.

You could be more careful.

(4) Modesty maxim

“Give a low value to S’s qualities.” (Leech, 2014)

“Minimize praise of self: Maximize dispraise of self.” (Leech, 1983)

In this maxim, “self-deprecation is often felt to be polite” (Leech, 2014). Accordingly, the modesty of the speaker’s speech elicits a denial from the hearer in accordance with approbation. Thus, this kind of gratuitous-self-deprecation is sometimes called “fishing for compliments.”

Example:

(A) *I am so dumb. I can’t believe it has taken me so long to figure out such a simple question!*

(B) *Come on! If you were dumb, there would not exist any smart guy in the world!*

Like the generosity maxim, this maxim is also expressed by the expressive and assertive utterances.

In the maxim of simplicity or modesty, participants are expected to be humble by reducing the praise to *self*. If the maxim of generosity or appreciation centered on *other*, the modesty maxim is *self*-centered. This maxim requires each participant to maximize dispraise of *self* and minimize praise of *self*.

Examples:

How stupid I am!

I don’t think I will do it well. I am still learning.

(5) Agreement maxim

“Give a high value to O’s opinions.” (Leech, 2014)

“Maximize dispraise of self: Maximize agreement between self and other.” (Leech, 1983)

As its name suggests, agreement is the preferred response when responding to others’ opinions or judgments and disagreement is undesirable. Therefore, it is important that the participants are able to develop agreement on the speech acts. If there is a match between the speaker and hearer in the speech acts, each one of them will be said to be polite.

Example:

(A) *Let’s have dinner together, ok?*

(B) *Good idea. I will wait for you at Bambu restaurant.*

In this conversation, one can infer that the speakers are able to build their agreement in such a way to portray politeness toward each other.

Furthermore, there is a tendency to increase an agreement and to minimize a disagreement by declaring a regret or partial agreement when someone speaks with another. The partial agreement is an agreement followed by a partial disagreement, implicating the speaker’s disagreement toward the addressee.

Example:

(A) *It is a beautiful site, isn’t it?*

(B) *Yeah, absolutely gorgeous* (using ‘*absolutely gorgeous*’ enhances polite agreement)

Leech (2014) mentioned certain points regarding this maxim:

(1) In cases in which the hearer has to agree with a compliment as in the following situations:

- The hearer may pay a compliment and agree, as in the following example:

Gee, it is nice of you to say that.

- The hearer may respond with apparent disbelief, as in the following example:

Oh, do you really think so?

- The hearer may thank the person who gave a compliment in the following way:

Thank you. It is nice of you to say so, but...

(2) The hearer may also defect a compliment in his reply by appreciating or reducing its power by neither agreeing nor disagreeing with it. For example:

A: I really like your outfit.

B: Oh! it is just something I picked up in a sale.

Kate: Steven is a terrific chef!

Steven: Nah.

- (3) The speaker may attribute the success to luck, for example:

Well, yeah, somehow, I was lucky enough to win the first prize.

It is worth mentioning that *self*-praise is immodest. This is noticeable, for example on the television, in interviews with victorious sportsmen and women; politicians, who have won elections; and winners of prestigious prizes or awards. For example:

Well, we did a pretty good job, thanks to tremendous efforts by all the folks here.

Victory speeches often use *we* rather than *I* to emphasize collective rather than individual achievement. This helps to reduce the impression that the speaker is being boastful by attributing the achievements to him/herself (Leech, 2014).

(6) Sympathy maxim

“Give a high value on O’s feelings.” (Leech, 2014)

“Minimize antipathy between self and other: Maximize sympathy between self and other.” (Leech, 1983)

Leech (1983), with reference to this maxim, stated that the participant can maximize sympathy between the parties. Antipathy toward the participants would be considered as an impolite act. People who behave with antipathy toward others, not to mention being cynical about the other party, will be considered as people who do not know manners in society. The following are examples of expression of sympathy:

I was sorry to hear about you father.

I take a pity on hearing you didn’t pass the exam.

For this maxim, Leech (2014) stated the following:

“A constraint of sympathy (or emotive concern) is needed to explain why we give a high value to other people feelings in such speech acts as congratulations and condolences. It is polite to show others that you share their feelings: feeling sad when they have suffered misfortune, and feeling joyful when they have cause for rejoicing. Congratulations, good wishes, and condolences are all intrinsically courteous speech acts and need no mitigation.”

Examples of expressing joy:

congratulations!/well-done./Have a good time!/Enjoy your meal.

In addition, there are also certain expressions of sadness, such as:

I was so sorry to hear about your father’s death.

Moreover, asking about people’s health is another case of showing sympathy, which is similar to condolences, for example:

How is your mother? I hope she is feeling better....

In this example, making an expression more extreme, can be achieved by highlighting the degree of expression they contain, for example, by using intensifying expressions.

Examples:

Warmest congratulations!

*I was so **terribly** sorry to hear about ...*

*I **do** hope she is feeling **much** better...*

*Have a **wonderful** time!*

(7) Obligation (of speaker to other) maxim

“Give a high value to S’s obligation to O,” (Leech, 2014)

As far as this maxim is concerned, Leech (2014) explains the situations in which it can be used as follows: “apologies for some offense by the speaker to the hearer giving high prominence to speaker’s fault and obligation to other and the expressions of gratitude for some favor the hearer has done to the speaker as well.”

Examples:

*I am (terribly) **sorry**./Please, **excuse me**./I am **afraid** I’ll have to leave early.*

Thanks./Thank you very much./Thank you very much indeed.

(8) Obligation (of other to speaker) maxim

“Give a low value to O’s obligation to S.” (Leech, 2014)

This maxim can be observed in response to apologies, which often minimizes the fault, and in response to an expression of thanks, which often minimizes the debt.

Examples:

*It is **OK**./Don’t worry./It was **nothing**.*

*That’s all right./You are **welcome**./No **problem**./Glad to be of **help**./It was a **pleasure**.*

(9) Opinion reticence maxim

“Give a low value to S’s opinions.” (Leech, 2014)

This maxim can be observed in cases in which the speaker consults the hearer’s opinion with the assumption that the hearer has a greater understanding, more wisdom, or more experience. For example, in western countries, it is considered to be helpful in a positive sense to ask questions and express opinions in the discussion period following a lecture.

Example:

*How do you **find** the topic?*

(10) Feeling reticence maxim

“Give a low value to S’s feelings.”(Leech, 2014)

Leech (2014) associated this maxim with the corresponding negative-politeness constraint, which places a low value on one’s own feelings. With regard to this maxim, Leech (2014) referred to the following quotation from Brown and Livenson (1978): “In English one should not admit that one is feeling too bad”.

Example:

(A) *Hi, how are you?*

(B) *Oh, **fine**. **Actually** though...*

2.2.2. Politeness and classroom interaction

This paper focuses on the attitudes teachers and students have about the politeness principle during classroom interactions. It is, therefore, important to review some applications of politeness, as these pertain to EFL classrooms.

LoCastro (2012) pointed out some instances in which politeness can be implemented more effectively in the classroom. He thinks that the first step starts in the early beginning when teachers and members of the educational institution select the appropriate curriculum, textbooks, and other supportive learning materials for their taught courses and the supervised programs, and it can be implemented by teaching pragmatics as an area of language development, especially for EFL. Teaching pragmatics is important for the first step and is concerned

with “how to be polite in the [a second language].” It focuses on expressions used in everyday conversational talks without a requirement to change their grammatical forms. These expressions serve as communication strategies that can sometimes save the speakers from thinking about how to reply appropriately when needed, because the expressions are stored in memory and are ready to be used automatically.

Learning these expressions is not limited to the early stages only but can be extended to the advanced stages when more complex and advanced expressions can be taught to deal with the different situations one can encounter. Furthermore, during teaching the linguistic formulaic expressions of a second language (L2), teachers can raise students’ awareness about politeness cues, why they are important, which expression fits the situation, or when it can be used. This is similarly done when parents tell their children how to behave politely. Therefore, when students understand and distinguish the polite from the impolite behavior and understand how to maintain relationships in an L2, lessons could focus on how L2 weaves through the course of conversation to achieve the communicative goals. Accordingly, students do express their need to learn and know strategies of being polite in L2 classes so that they can have an effective and fruitful interaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

This part deals with the overall design of the study, participants, data collection tool, and the procedures taken to achieve the aims.

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study are teachers and students. A total of 22 teachers, who teach in the English Department at the College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil, Erbil, Iraq, in the academic years of 2018 and 2019 participated in this study in addition to 50 fourth year students in the English Department of the same college and university.

3.2. The tool

The tool used to collect the data for the study was a closed questionnaire prepared by the researcher. Two sets of questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students,

were designed to collect the respective attitudes and perceptions about the application of Leech’s politeness maxims during classroom interactions. Each questionnaire consisted of 22 items designed on a 5-point Likert scale, which uses values ranging from 1 to 5, covering almost all the uses of the 10 politeness maxims proposed by Leech with reference to classroom interaction between a teacher and students. The scoring for the answers was as follows: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; and 1 =strongly disagree. The participants required 25 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. See Appendix 1 for the items of both questionnaires.

3.3. Procedure

The following procedures were followed to achieve the aims of the study:

- a theoretical background on classroom interaction and the Politeness Principle, focusing mainly on Leech’s 10 politeness maxims, were presented;
- the items for both questionnaires were designed on the bases of the applications of each maxim to achieve the content validity. Therefore, the items in the questionnaire covered almost all of the applications of the maxims’ in relation to classroom interactions;
- the questionnaires were tested on a pilot group of participants, which included 6 teachers and 15 students, to measure the reliability of the tool, during which the measurement device yielded nearly the same approximate results when utilized repeatedly under the same condition. Thus, the items of both questionnaires were verified with a known reliability score of 80;
- the questionnaires were handed out to the participants including both the teachers and students;
- the data collected were analyzed to determine the findings and draw the points of conclusion and recommendation.

4. DATA CLASSIFICATION AND DISCUSSION

In the data analysis, the focus was mainly on the 10 politeness maxims. Thus, the items of the questionnaires were decreased (merged) because the application of some of the maxims were expressed in more than one item

owing to its wide and frequent use. Therefore, the results of the items related to a single maxim were calculated together to generate an overall score and determine the general attitude toward that specific maxim. Accordingly, the data analysis was arranged in a way to help the researcher obtain an answer to the questions stated in the first part of this paper. This was achieved via analyzing

the teachers' and students' responses to the questionnaires statistically. Therefore, the overall results show that both the teachers and students have a positive attitude toward the implementation of the politeness principle in their classroom interactions, which is based on their main responses to the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' scale, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

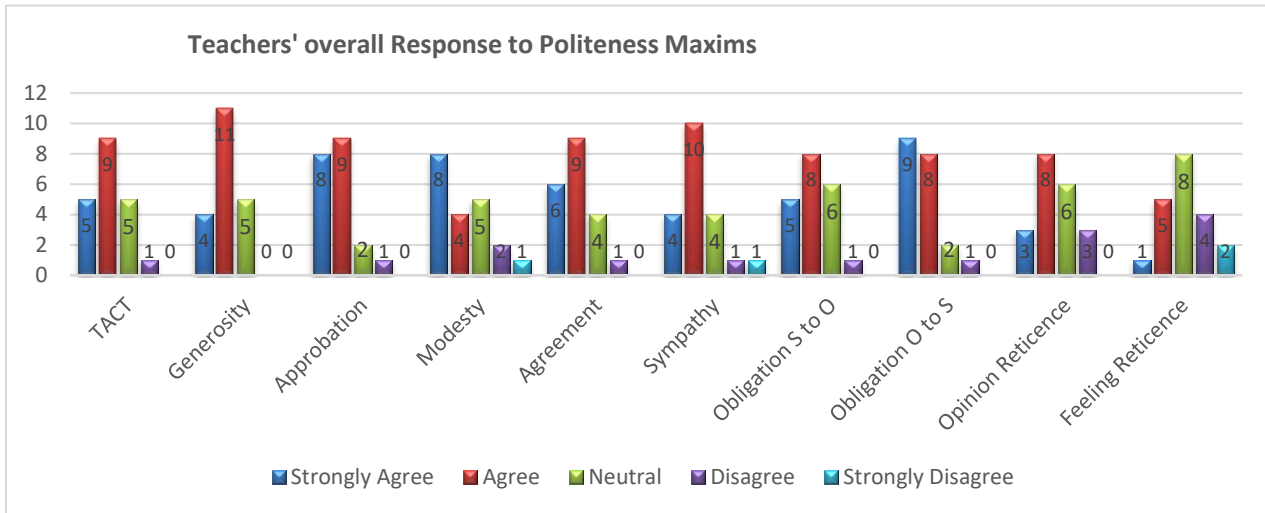


Figure 1. Teachers' overall Response to Politeness Maxims

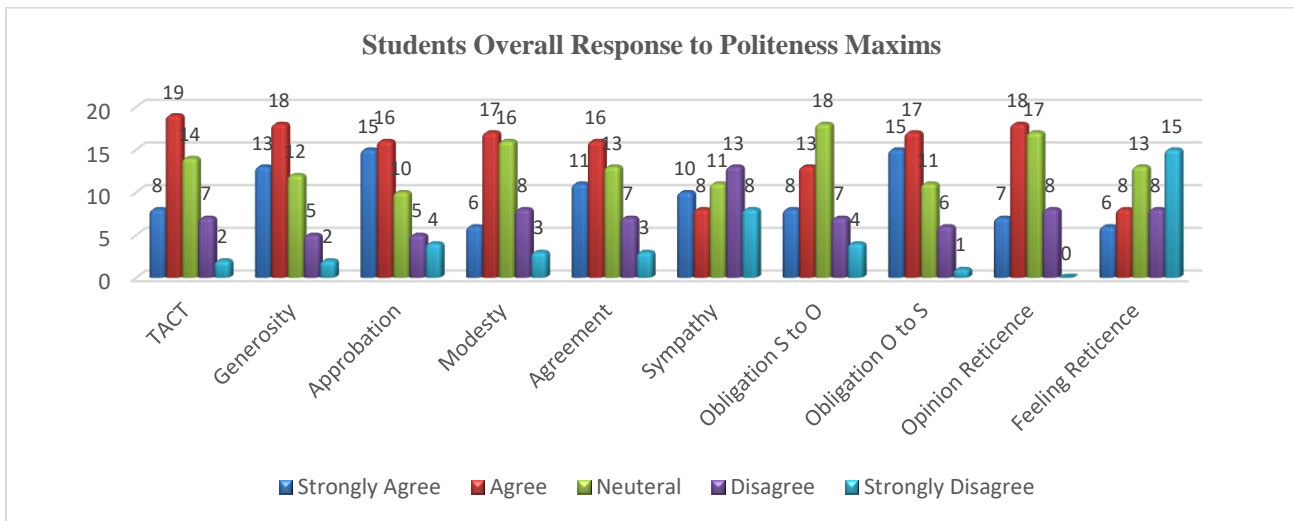


Figure 2. Students Overall Response to Politeness Maxims

From the Figures above, it is clear that the teachers' attitude toward the generosity maxim recorded the highest score, with 55% selecting the 'agree' scale,

which represents 11 of the 20 teachers in the sample. However, the students' attitude toward the tact maxim recorded the highest score, with 38% selecting the

'agree' scale, which represents 19 of the 50 students in the sample.

Moreover, the researcher attempted to analyze the results received from the respondents, i.e., the teachers and students, for each politeness maxim separately as follows:

(1) Tact maxim: this maxim is widely used in different communicative aspects in which classroom interaction can be regarded as one of them. This

maxim was expressed in items 1, 6, 12, and 20 of both questionnaires. Thus, the overall results, as given in Table 1 below, show that the participants almost have the same attitude toward the implementation of this maxim during classroom interactions. The teachers and students mostly responded with the agree option, representing 45% and 38% of the total, respectively. This indicates that the majority of the participants have a good understanding of this maxim and they usually make use of it while interacting with each other in the classroom.

Table 1: Teachers' and students' overall responses to the tact maxim

Tact maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers (n = 20)	5 25%	9 45%	5 25%	1 5%	0 0%	
Students (n = 50)	8 16%	19 38%	14 28%	7 14%	2 4%	

(2) Generosity maxim: it means the speaker is offering items of assistance that the hearer is in need of, such as time, goods, money, knowledge, reward, etc. Items 2, 16, and 22 in both questionnaires were devoted to measure the participants' attitudes toward this maxim. According to the overall scores, the teachers are frequently generous with their students by sharing information and increasing the students' knowledge in the areas of their weaknesses. This may be because of

55% of the teachers have chosen the agree option in their responses, indicating their high benefit to others and showing a high level of politeness in the classroom interaction. Similarly, the students' responses to this maxim confirm that the teachers are generous with them and that they are generous when they interact with each other during class periods while doing exercises, working in groups, solving problems, etc. The details are presented in Table 2 below.

the nature of teaching, the main concern being to exchange, share, and transfer knowledge to others. Thus,

Table 2: Teachers' and students' overall responses to the generosity maxim

Generosity maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers (n = 20)	4 20%	11 55%	5 25%	0 0%	0 0%	
Students (n = 50)	13 26%	18 36%	12 24%	5 10%	2 4%	

(3) Approbation maxim: generally, this maxim is used when the speaker avoids the use of unpleasant words or gestures or directing unpleasant behavior to the hearer. Thus, teachers and students can make use of the principles

of this maxim in their classroom interaction and these have been stated in items 3, 7, 13, and 17 in both questionnaires. A look at the teachers' results show that most of the teachers have a strong attitude toward

implementing the principles of this maxim during classroom interaction because the most frequently selected scale was agree, representing 45% of the total, whereas 40% of the respondents have selected strongly agree. This indicates that teachers value the students' qualities and praise them when doing an activity, taking part in the lectures, etc. Similarly, the responses of the

students were closely matched between the agree and strongly agree options, representing 32% and 30% of the responses, respectively. However, 8% of the respondents chose the "strongly disagree" scale but this proposition can represent some exceptional, personal, or rare instances that students may have faced. The details are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' and students' overall responses to the approbation maxim

Approbation maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	8 40%	9 45%	2 10%	1 5%	0 0%
	Students (n = 50)	15 30%	16 32%	10 20%	5 10%	4 8%

(4) Modesty Maxim: from its name, this maxim requires the speaker to be modest in a way by giving low value to his/her qualities. This is achieved via dispraising self or praising self to the minimum. To be modest is to behave simply and in a humble way with others in communication and interaction in the role of teacher or student. Accordingly, items 4 and 8 of the questionnaires were concerned with the measurement of the participants' attitudes toward this maxim. The teachers' responses to this maxim show that 40% of the total sample are

habitually modest with their students. In contrast, the responses of the students were closely separated between the agree and neutral scale, representing 34% and 32%, respectively. This result indicates that there are some cases in which the teachers or students may not be modest or may not implement this maxim appropriately, which may be caused by the personality of that person or the differences in their social ranks and power. Refer to Table 4 for the details.

Table 4: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Modesty Maxim

Modesty maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	8 40%	4 20%	5 25%	2 10%	1 5%
	Students (n = 50)	6 12%	17 34%	16 32%	8 16%	3 6%

(5) Agreement Maxim: this maxim was expressed in items 14, 18, and 21 in both questionnaires. It involves the extent to which a high value is given to another's opinions, interests, and ideas. This can be noted when there is a sort of agreement among communicators from different fields of life and for different purposes, with classroom interaction being the main focus here. Teachers, in their responses, show that there mostly is a kind of agreement between them and their students

because the most common option that was selected for this maxim was agree, representing 45% of the total. Moreover, a high proportion of the students, representing 32% of the total, also responded with agree. These results show that the teachers value their students' interests, needs, and ideas, which serves to improve their knowledge of and information about the topics they study, and this can be noticed among the students themselves. See Table 5 for the details.

Table 5: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Agreement Maxim

Agreement Maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	6 30%	9 45%	4 20%	1 5%	0 0%
	Students (n = 50)	11 22%	16 32%	13 26%	7 14%	3 6%

(6) Sympathy Maxim: this maxim deals with the extent to which the speaker gives value to the listener's feelings. This is specified in item 9 in both questionnaires. Following analysis of the teachers' responses, it was found that 50% responded with the agree scale. In contrast, a high proportion of the students responded with the disagree and neutral scale, representing 26% and 22% of the total, respectively. The reason behind having these differences between the teachers' and students' responses

is because of the different attitudes they have in the interpretation and understanding of this maxim. In addition to that, the teachers' duties and responsibilities are different from those of the students, for example, a student may be interested in certain things while he/she is studying but this may not be of relevance to the teacher and the subject matter, deviating from the teacher's and class policy. See the details about the responses in Table 6 below

Table 6: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Sympathy Maxim

Sympathy maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	4 20%	10 50%	4 20%	1 5%	1 5%
	Students (n = 50)	10 20%	8 16%	11 22%	13 26%	8 16%

(7) Obligation of speaker "S" to other "O": this is one of the newly added maxims to the existing ones when they were updated. This maxim is used when the speaker has an obligation to apologize to the other for using offensive expressions or when expressing words of thanks and gratitude for things the others did for the speaker. To investigate the attitude of the participants toward this maxim, items 5 and 10 in both questionnaires were devoted to it. Thus, the results obtained from the teachers' responses show that they frequently practice this maxim because the majority of the respondents, representing 40% of the total, chose the agree scale. The students mainly responded with the neutral scale, which represents 36% of the total. This difference between the teachers' and students' results highlights the different attitudes they have toward the different situations they face during classroom interaction, in addition to the individual differences that exist among the interlocutors. The details are presented in Table 7

Table 7: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Obligation (S to O) Maxim

Obligation (S to O) maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	5 25%	8 40%	6 30%	1 5%	0 0%
	Students (n = 50)	8 16%	13 26%	18 36%	7 14%	4 8%

(8) Obligation of O to S: this is the second updated maxim, which is used when the speaker gets responses from others when they express an apology, thanks, gratitude, etc. This can be observed clearly during teacher-students and student-student interactions in the classroom, and it was reflected in item 15 in the questionnaires. According to the records obtained from both sets of questionnaires, there is once again a correlation between their responses. First, teachers mainly responded with the strongly agree scale,

representing 45% of the total, in addition to the 40% who responded with the agree scale. These results indicate that although it is a newly added maxim, it is implemented by the interactors as a principle of conversation. Second, the analysis of the students' records shows a correlation with the teachers' results because most of the students selected either the agree or strongly agree scales, representing 34% and 30% of the total, respectively. Table 8 shows these results.

Table 8: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Obligation (O to S) Maxim

Obligation (O to S) maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	9 45%	8 40%	2 10%	1 5%	0 0%
	Students (n = 50)	15 30%	17 34%	11 22%	6 12%	1 2%

(9) Opinion reticence maxim: the participants' attitudes toward the implementation of this maxim was reflected their answers to item 19 in the questionnaires. This was the third newly added maxim by G. Leech to the existing politeness maxims. The main implementation of this maxim is when the speaker asks for another's wisdom, experiences, and opinions to get a better understanding, which is commonly implemented in our classes when students ask for further information about the topic being discussed, or when they ask the teacher for other

alternatives to better understand the topic or answer questions they might not be articulating. Similarly, teachers may ask students for other ways to deliver their knowledge easily. Therefore, if we refer back to the teachers' responses, the highest score was recorded for the agree scale, representing 40% of the total. In agreement, the students mostly responded with the agree and neutral options, representing 36% and 34% of the responses, respectively. For the details on the responses about this maxim, refer to Table 9.

Table 9: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Opinion Reticence Maxim

Opinion reticence maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	3 15%	8 40%	6 30%	3 15%	0 0%

Students (n = 50)	7 14%	18 36%	17 34%	8 16%	0 0%
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(10) Feeling reticence maxim: This is mainly used when the speaker expresses a positive feeling (feeling positively) even in bad or difficult situations. This is a good attitude to impart to students in terms of their feelings and reasoning because they pass through different situations of success and failure during their study period. Item 11 in both the questionnaires addressed this maxim. According to the scores, no correlation can be observed between the teachers' and students' responses toward this maxim. On the one hand,

the teachers responded mostly with the neutral scale, representing 40% of the total. On the other hand, the students responded most commonly with the strongly disagree scale, representing 30% of the total, as detailed in Table 10. The difference in these scores is because of the students' fear of failure in their study. Moreover, teachers may not positively respond to the students' failures or weaknesses as reflected in their course results so as to not let them feel inadequate, especially with regard to their achievements during their academic study.

Table 10: Teachers' and Students' Overall Responses to the Feeling Reticence Maxim

Feeling reticence maxim	Participants	Likert Scale				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Teachers (n = 20)	1 5%	5 25%	8 40%	4 20%	2 10%
	Students (n = 50)	6 12%	8 16%	13 26%	8 16%	15 30%

In the analysis of the results, one can deduce that politeness exists in classroom interactions on the basis of the positive attitudes toward the implementation of the politeness principle that were measured for the participants. This helps to create a kind of harmony between the teachers and their students on the one hand, and among the students themselves on the other hand. Therefore, it is important to implement and use politeness in the classroom discourse for 2 reasons. First, it helps the teacher to create a friendly and positive atmosphere based on the respectful relationship between the teachers and their students and among the students themselves. This will, in turn, develop the process of teaching and learning. Second, when the teacher uses polite expressions, the students automatically adopt the strategies and principles used by their teacher. This is the one point of similarity that is discussed in almost all of the previous studies conducted on politeness in classroom interactions.

When comparing the results of one maxim with other maxims, the teachers' attitudes toward the generosity maxim recorded the highest score, which is because of the principal role teachers play in the classroom. However, the students' attitudes toward the tact maxim recorded the highest score, which is because of the wide use of this maxim's implications.

Furthermore, in analyzing the maxims separately, there is a high correlation between the attitudes (a kind of balance) of the teachers and students in their responses, most of them selecting the agree and strongly agree options in the expression of their attitudes, except for the sympathy, obligation (S to O), and feeling reticence maxims. These differences can be attributed to various factors related to the nature of the teaching process, including the teacher and class policy, their interpretation, and understanding of the cases.

5. CONCLUSION

By analyzing the data, the following conclusions were derived:

- (1) both the teachers and students have positive attitudes toward the politeness principle, and this helps them with the implementation of the politeness maxims during classroom interactions;
- (2) in almost all the uses of the politeness maxims, the teachers and students responded most commonly with the agree option, which is a good indicator that the respondents have a positive attitude toward the implementation of the politeness maxims and that they

take them into consideration during classroom interactions;

(3) the teachers' highest response was toward the generosity maxim as opposed to the other maxims, whereas the tact maxim measured the highest score when compared with the other maxims for the students' attitudes;

(4) in analyzing the maxims separately, there is a high correlation between the attitudes (a kind of balance) of the teachers and students in their responses except for the sympathy, obligation, (S to O) and feeling reticence maxims;

(5) although 4 new maxims have been added recently to the existing politeness maxims and the respondents may not be intimately aware of them, the results show that they are implemented successfully during classroom interactions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The positive attitudes measured for the teachers and students based on their responses toward the implementation of the politeness principle during classroom interactions, aided the researcher in proposing the following recommendations for teachers and students to aid in the development of this process.

For teachers:

It is recommended that teachers develop their knowledge about pragmatics, strengthen their communicative interactions, especially in the use of the appropriate politeness strategies, and pay attention to the social values because the teacher is the model for the class and she/he is going to be imitated by her/his students.

Teachers should provide opportunities for the students to take part in classroom interactions by giving them communicative aspects that develop their knowledge and skills in aspects used in conversation including politeness strategies. This will, in turn, develop the students' pragmatic competence.

For students:

It is important for the students to be able to present the desired image of themselves including the norms of their

personality, background, wishes, needs, and desires. At the same time, it is important to recognize another's image, as desired in social interactions, to enhance politeness and avoid impolite utterances and behaviors.

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APPENDIX

Consent Form

Dear Participants:

The questionnaire attached is the tool of a paper entitled “Teachers’ and Students’ Attitudes to the Implementation of Politeness Principle in Classroom Interaction”.

Researcher:

The Politeness Principle is a series of maxims, which Geoffrey Leech has proposed as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges.

The politeness principle proposed by Geoffrey Leech is applied in this paper to know teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the implementation of politeness principle in classroom interaction between students and their teachers.

In 1983, Geoffrey Leech published his *Principles of Pragmatics* in London, offering his landmark model of the politeness principle, which has been regarded as the most appropriate for practical situations. He has categorized his politeness principle into six maxims but, later in 2014 he published his *The Pragmatics of*

Politeness in United States where he revised, updated the politeness maxims, reformulated and increased them into ten ones including: tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, sympathy maxim, obligation (of speaker to other) maxim, obligation (of other to speaker) maxim, opinion reticence maxim, and feeling reticence maxim.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet of the above paper. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can phase out any time without giving any reason.
- I understand that any information given by me maybe used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team.
- I understand that my name will not be appearing in any presentation, report or Articles.
- I agree to take part in the above study

(1) Teachers’ Questionnaire

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-	Politeness is used when you interact with your students by commanding, requesting, ordering, etc.					
2-	Teachers provide help in conducting classroom activities such as: “Do you need help?”, “Can I give you a hand?”... so forth.					
3-	Teachers avoid using unpleasant words with their students.					
4-	You behave modestly when you interact with your students.					
5-	Words of apology is a part of teachers' behavior during interaction, for instance: “I am sorry...”, “Excuse me please, ...”, etc.					
6-	Expressions like: “what about...”, “why not...” are used by teachers politely and regularly when <i>planning, promising, threatening,</i> and ...so on.					
7-	Teachers behave friendly with your students, sharing them their happiness, sadness, and other daily events by thanking, congratulating, blaming, condoling, apologizing, etc.					
8-	Words of self-praise are not used when you explain and deliver your lectures, i.e.: you behave modestly with your students during classroom interaction in general.					
9-	During interaction, you share with your students in talking about their good achievements via congratulating them, expressing condolence for their sad					

	events, or talking about their weak achievements such as: "I am sorry for your low mark", etc.
10-	The interlocutors politely apologize while behaving in an offensive manner or doing something wrong, such as: "I am really sorry", so forth.
11-	Teachers' behavior enhances students' positivity rather than negativity even when they feel bad among themselves during interaction.
12-	As a teacher, you promise or offer a reward for the student such as 'marks', 'gifts', etc. when (s)he gives the right answer, does an activity, or a project.
13-	Teachers avoid using unpleasant language such as: "you did not do correctly", instead, they may say: "you can do better if you try", so forth for students' mistakes.
14-	You, as a teacher, politely take care of students' opinion, beliefs or judgement even if they are opposite to yours or to class policy.
15-	As a teacher, you accept students' apologies via using expressions as: "That is ok", "No worries", "No problem" ...etc.
16-	Teachers are generous (open handed) with their students whenever the students are in need of help such as answering questions, giving clarifications and providing extra teaching sources and materials.
17-	While classroom interaction, you praise your students for acting out an activity, for instance: telling them "well done", "good job", "thanks", etc.
18-	Your reactions to students' compliments or disbeliefs are politely reflected.
19-	The interlocutors ask for information and give feedback, for instance: They express the extent of their understanding and ask for the misunderstanding, exchange ideas, and ask for wisdom and experience while interaction.
20-	Respectably, teachers intend to work for the students' regular interests, wants and needs.
21-	As a teacher, you do not mind when students give their own opinions in their classroom interaction.
22-	Teachers readily provide help for the students while interacting or doing a task.

(2) Students' Questionnaire

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-	While teaching, teachers politely use to show commands, in a way like an order, request, advice, or recommend to invite students to take part in the lesson.					
2-	While interacting, teachers provide help in conducting classroom activities such as: "Do you need help?", "Can I give you a hand?" ...so forth.					
3-	Teachers avoid using unpleasant words with their students. That is to say; they avoid using impolite expressions.					
4-	Teachers are modest with their students in a way that they avoid talking about their abilities, possessions, and achievements during classroom interaction.					
5-	Your teachers express their apologies in certain cases while interacting, for instance: "I am sorry...", "Excuse me please,", etc.					
6-	When <i>planning, promising, threatening</i> , and <i>...so on</i> , teachers politely and regularly impose or interfere to the classroom issues, such as using the expressions: "what about...", "why not...".					

- 7- Teachers behave friendly with their students, sharing them their happiness, sadness, and other daily events by thanking, congratulating, blaming, condoling, apologizing, ...etc.
- 8- Teachers do not praise themselves when explaining and delivering lectures and they behave modestly with their students during interaction.
- 9- during interaction, teachers share with their students' good achievements via congratulating them, expressing condolence for their sad events, or talking about their weak achievements such as: "I am sorry for your low mark", etc.
- 10- The interlocutors politely apologize while behaving in an offensive manner or doing something wrong, such as: "I am really sorry", ...so forth.
- 11- Teachers avoid students having bad or negative feeling among themselves, i.e.: they enhance positivity rather than negativity by encouraging students to feel positive even in bad situations.
- 12- When a student gives the right answer, does an activity, or a project, the teacher promises or offers a reward for the student such as 'marks', 'gift', etc.
- 13- Even when students make mistakes, unpleasant language is not used by teachers such as: "you did not do correctly", instead they may say: "you can do better if you try", so forth.
- 14- Teachers, politely, take care of students' beliefs opinions or judgement even if they are opposite to teachers' beliefs or to class policy.
- 15- The interlocutors' response to apologies are in a respectable manner and they mostly accept the apologies such as "That is ok", "No worries", "No problem", etc.
- 16- Teachers are generous (open handed) with their students whenever the students are in need of help such as answering their questions, giving clarifications, providing extra teaching materials or sources ...etc. during classroom interaction.
- 17- While acting out an activity, the participants are praised by using expressions like: "well done", "good job", "thanks", etc.
- 18- Teachers react politely to students' compliments or disbeliefs.
- 19- The interlocutors ask for information and give feedback, for instance: They express the extent of their understanding and ask for the misunderstanding, exchange ideas, ask for wisdom and experience from their teachers in classroom interaction.
- 20- Politely, teachers intend to work for the students' regular interests, wants and needs.
- 21- Teachers do not mind when students give their own opinions in their classroom interaction.
- 22- Teachers readily provide help for the students while interacting, doing a task, or an activity.