

**Communication Challenges between Teachers and Learners Based on Linguistic
Resolution Features. A Case Study of Bahati Sub County, Nakuru.**

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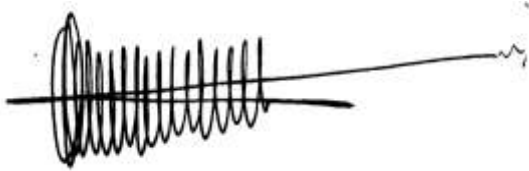
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**A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Award of the
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Declaration

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or institution.



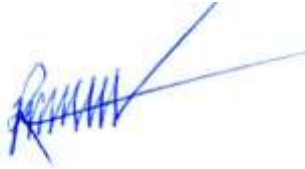
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my husband Aluora for being my greatest enthusiast and for his selfless effort while undertaking the assignment. I also appreciate my children Edree and Ivan for their serenity and giving me ample time to do the work. Lastly, I am grateful to my parents and siblings for unabridged support.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

F:	Female
FTA(s):	Face Threatening Act(s)
FSA(s):	Face Saving Act(s)
M:	Male
UG:	Undeclared Gender
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Abstract

Communication is the passing of information between interlocutors and receiving of feedback from contexts such as the one under study in secondary schools in Bahati sub-county. Interlocutors are participants in a discussion or a conversation; in this study these were teachers and students. Feedback in this context refers to response, rejoinder or retort that the decoder of the message gives in the course of communication. This study aimed to identify the communication challenges between form one learners and teachers in a school set up in Bahati Sub-County. The study identified politeness markers used in student-teacher oral communication based on the three categories of politeness markers; modal markers, lexical content of politeness and sentence typology reflecting politeness. Instances when different politeness markers were used in oral communication in school and the main illocutionary act commonly used by the study population were also identified. The study methodology involved learners and teachers filling a questionnaire that included both open and close ended questions. Quantitative data was compiled in an excel spread sheet® for analysis. Qualitative data was analysed and interpreted appropriately. This study reports that, *please* was the most used lexical politeness marker, *kindly* and *excuse me* were also extensively used. The participants used the imposing modals more than any other kind. Based on Leech's politeness maxims and scales the study found that most interlocutors were less polite. The illocutionary act commonly used by the study participants is the directive, which imposes on the hearer and thus considered impolite, this leads to hitches in communication thus affecting the quality of conversation between the learner and the teacher making it hard to achieve communication goals. The participants were more polite when addressing their seniors and when seeking assistance but less polite when addressing colleagues or when the information was not beneficial to them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Oral communication is derived from the Latin word “*communes*” which means common hence oral communication can be defined as sharing common experiences with people. Communication therefore is a unique tool in any organizational planning and effective execution of institutions mandate. Effective coordination of different players in a school setting is a function of a well-defined communication system. Without clear communication channels, the achievement of institutional goals can be a challenge. An effective form of communication helps build relationships and drive members of a given community achieve goals with ease (Kayode, 2012:105). The dynamics of our time propelled by the rapidly advancing technology have made communication in schools even more sophisticated as compared to the past decades (Kindiki, 2009:257; Nair & Joglekar, 2012: 2; Totseva, 2015:118).

Does a safe and impartial communication exist? This can be found by the use of different linguistic facilitators. Linguistic facilitators are used to enhance communication in both written and spoken text. “All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts” as Belza elaborates, speaking entails performing these acts (Belza, 2008:23). (Searle, 1979:12) gives five categories based on functions in which all the acts fit, these are the; commissives, declaratives, directives, expressives and representatives. Speech acts can also be direct or indirect. Speech Act Theory is premised on utterance which is dependent on the will of the speaker and therefore it is totally individual. As a medium of communication, speech is dependent on linguistic competence and knowledge of the speaker (Baktir, 2016: 5).

First published in 1978 and widely acknowledged in literature, Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory has generated great controversy and debate (Ide, 1989:3; Matsumoto, 1988:2). The theory is premised on two parts; first one pertaining the politeness nature and its role in interaction while the second consists of strategies of politeness in interaction. According to The Politeness Theory, politeness has a dual nature; (Kitamura, 2000:8) politeness can generally be identified in four broad strategies; the direct conduct, positive politeness, indirect conduct, and negative politeness. (Svarova, 2008:6), documents that politeness strategies can as well be termed as either formal or informal politeness. Brown and

Levinson's theory as well asserts the role of face in course of human interactions. When face threatening acts are committed, saving strategies are put in place to counter the effects of such acts.

“The central concept in Leech's model is that of cost-benefit scale of politeness related to both the speaker and the hearer. Politeness according to Leech, involves minimising the cost and maximising the benefit to the speaker/hearer.” (Watts, 2003:66). Watts documents six maxims of politeness principle which are; tact, generosity, modesty, approbation, agreement-disagreement and sympathy maxim. He goes on to explain that there are scales of delicacy which work side by side with the maxims above which are; the cost-benefit scale, optionality scale, indirectness scale, authority scale and social distance scale (Watts, 2003:68). According to Leech politeness is important in helping maintain friendly relations and enabling the interlocutors cooperate. For an utterance to be termed as being polite it should; give options, not impose and should bear less cost and more benefit to the hearer.

Premised on the importance of linguistic resolution features in enhancing smooth communication, role of communication in growth of learners and essence of transition from one level of education to the next, this study sought to find out the challenges of communication between teachers and form one learners based on these features.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Inappropriate use of linguistic facilitators or failure to use them in speech often leads to communication hitches. Communication challenges can make it difficult for learners to get the best out of the education they seek to acquire from school which is important in the workplace. Poor oral communication also affects the student-teacher relationship as well as student to student relationships. This can be a barrier to effective delivery and acquisition of knowledge and skills. Some of the outcomes associated with poor communication between the parties in a school are poor academic performance and school drop out for perceived teacher-student hostility. According to (Svarova, 2008:2), use of appropriate politeness markers in communication enables those interacting to relax, enjoy the conversations and the interactions. There often exist poor student-teacher relationships arising from day-to-day communication. This originates from teachers feeling students are rude and uncooperative especially when judged from their language. The students on the other hand may limit or avoid interacting with teachers due to perceived hostility.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Which are the politeness markers commonly used by form one learners?
2. When are the politeness markers most likely to be used in interlocutory circumstances?
3. Which is the main illocutionary act used in form one student-teacher oral communication?

1.4. Objectives

1.4.1. General Objective

The aim of this study was to identify communication challenges between teachers and form one learners using linguistic resolution features.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

1. To identify the politeness markers commonly used by form one learners.
2. To establish instances when politeness markers are likely to be used in interlocutory circumstances.
3. To determine the main sentence typology used in form one student-teacher oral communication.

1.5. Justification of the Study.

Knowledge of challenges experienced in communication between form one learners and teachers is important in reducing conflict that may arise during conversation hence ensuring smooth communication. It is also helpful in designing strategies to overcome these barriers and enable easy integration of form one learners in the school community within the shortest time possible. This will increase the quality of student teacher relationship from early stage of admission and enhance measurable outcomes such as performance and class transition. This study provides an in-depth understanding of use of different politeness markers and the significance of the markers in the school context. This study is also important in helping understand the role of different speech acts in student-teacher and student-student relationship.

1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research focused on identifying the challenges of oral communication between sampled teachers and sampled form one learners in three schools in Bahati sub-county premised on The Politeness Theory, Leech's Politeness Principle and The Speech Act Theory. The number of students was 120 learners i.e. 40 learners per school, 10 teachers and 17 students'

leaders. The study delved into linguistic resolution features commonly used in the course of student teacher relationship. The study did not however look into the communication challenges between form one learners and the learners of upper classes as well as the student leaders from the other classes. The study also excluded paralinguistic facilitators. Therefore this study does not include the impact other learners may have on the communication challenges between form one learners and teachers.

1.7. Definition of Terms

Commissives:	These are speech acts where communicator commits to doing something. E.g. promising, threatening, offering.
Directives:	These are speech acts that direct the hearer towards doing something e.g. requesting, asking, ordering, and advising.
Expressives:	They communicate about the speaker's feeling about a certain circumstances e.g. apologizing, thanking, welcoming.
Face:	A term coined in the politeness theory to refer to self-identity that people want to claim in public.
Face Saving Act:	Something done to try to lessen embarrassment or making oneself look better in a situation where a person is made to look bad.
Face Threatening Act:	These are ordinal conducts such as requests, denial and advices that can lead to impairment of faces.
Feedback:	A product arising from critical assessment on information provided.
Interlocutory circumstance:	The course of a dialogue or conversation
Linguistic facilitator:	Are linguistic expressions that are used to enhance communication in both written and spoken text.
Linguistic Resolution Features:	These are strategies put forward to mitigate an impending fall-out in a conversation.
Message:	An underlying theme or conclusion to be drawn from a conversation.

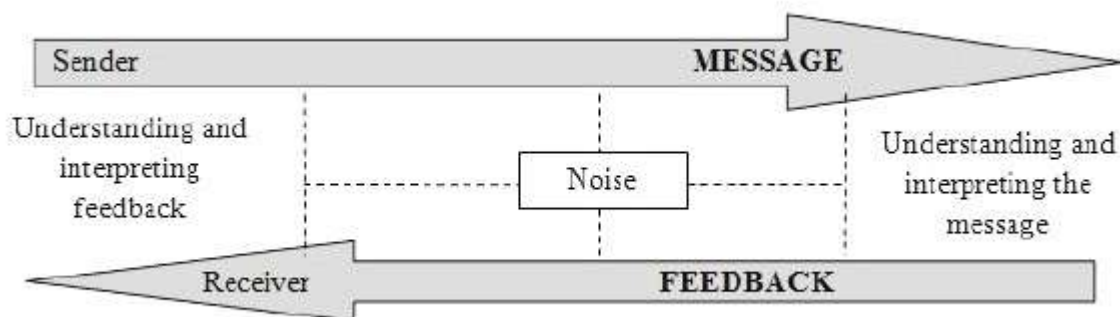
Negative Face:	Refers to the fundamental claim to personal preserves, territories, and right to non-distraction
Politeness:	The act of being polite; etiquette.
Politeness Theory:	Refers to conventionalized rules in human interactions in different cultures as well as languages.
Politeness Strategies:	A term referring to an array of principles that convey politeness in an interaction.
Politeness markers:	Are linguistic expressions employed to show politeness.
Positive face:	Is the desire to be understood and accepted.
Pragma linguistic markers:	The knowledge of the speaker on features of language use and structure and expressive resources of the language itself instead of the social context.
Representatives:	These are acts that contain certain statements about the world, e.g. describing, concluding, and claiming.
Social Distance:	The extent to which the addresser and addressee are conversant with each other.

1.8. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.8.1. Communication

While most human beings are born with an inherent ability to speak, not all have ability to communicate well unless they commit to learn and develop the skills and refine it further. Communication can generally be defined as the act of giving, receiving or exchanging information, ideas and opinions so that both parties involved in a communication process understand the message (Keyton, 2009:3). Communication as a process involves four elements; sender and receiver of the message, the message and the feedback.

Figure 1: Keyton's Adapted Process of Communication (Keyton, 2009:3)



The above summarily indicates that for effective communication, one needs to put into consideration these basic elements; the audience, the addressee, message, coding and the decoding of the message. Noise is a factor in the process of oral communication causing time to time disruption. The distraction can occur at either encoding or decoding level or both levels. In this study, impoliteness is noise. In a school set up, learners form a greater part of the audience as most of the time the message is academic instructions for teaching the learner and assessing the learner's skills acquired in the course of learning. While the essence of school has been to give instructions and teach specific subjects, with the changing times, school is considered a bridge between the present and the future of the student. Lunenburg carries research on barriers to effective communication in a school set up and how communication skills affect goals in an institution. This study similarly probes into communication challenges in school set up between learners and teachers. . According to (Lunenburg, 2010:6), lack of effective communication inhibits organizational effectiveness in playing its role in any community.

Communication is termed to be effective when there is coherence in communication process and both the sender and the receiver of the message make meaning from conclusions from the message and feedback as it may apply. To enhance communication, there is need of etiquette between the participants to enable both parties feel comfortable and appreciated in the process. Politeness theories of communication enhance the incorporation of this etiquette in the course of communication enabling people to communicate effectively (Svarova, 2008:6). Svarova in her work discusses the importance of polite expressions and student's ability to appropriately use these expressions. Svarova's work aimed at measuring the extent learners are competent in English in relation to the choice of polite expressions they employ. The first objective of this study is to identify the most common politeness marker by both the students and teachers and also the impact it has on effective communication.

1.8.2. Linguistic Resolution Features in Communication

Institutional success is hinged on the ability to effectively pass information and get those whose information is meant for understand the message. The success of passing on this information can leave a lasting influence on the audience or fail to achieve the intended purpose of passing the information. According to (Totseva, 2015:127) a school is mediator between an individual and his/her future. This role is premised on the bond that exists between communication and linguistic facilitators. The school is considered a mediator as to the role it plays in reconciling different interests i.e. for teachers, learners and parents. School is an educational institution meant to teach and influence. It is not just a closed environment for itself and only in the abstract future for something else. The basic function of school in contemporary world itself, education, relies entirely on communication (Kindiki 2009:257). In this view of importance of communication and effective communication for that matter in school, the overall objective of the study is to identify the communication challenges between the students and teachers.

Politeness theories shape the day to day interaction between students and teachers. The lexical phrases the students use and the way the wording of speech comes out is usually central to passing of key information between the interlocutors. The Theories of Politeness explain the standardized rules in human relationships in varied environments. As Kedves puts it, the character of a relationship is dependent on the process of adjusting actions continuously and repeatedly, face can be improved on, maintained, interfered with or even lost and as such incorporating politeness in a conversation is important as it preserves one's face. Simply put, the making of personhood is learned and built through daily human

interactions (Kedves 2013:433) . This can be seen best in a student-teacher relationship as well as in student-student relationship. Polite language positively influences development and particularly language development as employed in future interactions. Interlocutors employ politeness markers that are used to show politeness in the course of conversation. While the politeness markers vary greatly depending with environment, there is universality in how most of them are used and taught to learners.

In Speech Act Theory, Searle defines speech act as an expression with a function in the process of communication. Speech is represented by shorter or longer strings of linguistic items used to express a particular purpose. As a medium of communication, speech is dependent on linguistic knowledge and competence of the speaker. To achieve coherent and comprehensible communication, the speaker has to balance his/her speech. As a tool of communication, speech acts play many roles in different occasions. These roles vary from controlling people's social behaviour, influencing thoughts to seeking information among many other functions (Baktir, 2016:12). Baktir brings out the different roles carried out by the speech acts. This study also examines the various speech acts employed by the participants and how the specific acts enhance or impair smooth communication.

When Politeness is discussed from two perspectives; positive and negative politeness, each ends to play a particular function of speech. Positive politeness is expressed in two ways; by showing similarities amongst those interacting and by appreciation of interlocutors own image. Negative politeness in communication on the other hand can be demonstrated in two ways; by saving the face of the interlocutor through mitigation of face threatening acts(FTA's), such as disapproval and giving advice or by satisfaction of negative face respecting right of addressee not to be imposed on (Kitamura, 2000:6). Here, the speech can be said to be playing an appreciative role. Many other functions of speech may come out depending with the choice of words or the speaker. The Study looks at the most employed speech act by the study participants. It further analyses the FTAs the participants commit and the strategies they put in place to mitigate and the impact of the failure to mitigate.

1.8.3. Politeness Theory and Communication

According to Janson, 2012:280), language and linguistics provide the vehicle for understanding of our societies and ourselves in the course of our activities and interactions. These interactions include, the fields of education as well as day to day living . In linguistics,

Brown and Levinson, (1987) Politeness Theory is widely used and applied in structure of relationships between different cultures and politeness.

Erving Goffman's work of 1967 elaborates the relationship between linguistic behaviour and a personhood perception. In his work, Goffman argues that individuals have self-esteem, which he termed as "*face*", and that they are continuously involved in protection and defence of faces. He defines *face* as the "public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This happens daily in student-teacher relationships as students tend to want to appear good before their teachers even when their character is on the contrary. Arguably, relationships depend, in turns, on the process of actions of repeated adjustments. When the students are admitted on day one, the process of adjusting to the new environment commences that is, the construction of personhood is a continuous process learned and established through everyday human relationships, to preserve face, interlocutors, as rational agents, accept its vulnerability and are prepared to cooperate with others, (Kedves, 2013:434, Kitamura, 2000:6).

The learners and staff in school interact with different stakeholders and undertake different roles. This diversity makes them assume varied faces as situation demands. This is experienced going up or down the rank. The face can either be preserved or lost depending on circumstance or the person one is interacting with.

Brown and Levinson in their work construct a further comprehension of Goffman's *face* concept by splitting it into two categories; positive face and the negative face. They use the term *positive face* in their work to refer to the positive or the good consistency of personality of self-image claimed by the interlocutors in a conversation. Positive face incorporates the desire to be understood and positively accepted by other actors in a social relationship. Whereas they use the phrase *negative face* to refer to "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, right to non-distraction i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Negative face is comprised of self-independence. While participants in a relationship try as much as possible to keep their faces and minimize affronts to either of the two categories of faces, faces can be impaired. Impairment of faces can be due to ordinal conducts like denials, requests, and advices among others. In academic world, denials and advices play at the centre stage. The damaging conducts are considered as face threatening act (FTA). To downsize an FTA, a politeness strategy needs to be employed (Ide, 1989:4). If linguistic resolution features are used appropriately, the speaker avoids conflicts

failure to use it or inappropriate usage leads to or aggravates conflict. The study examines how the participants use these linguistic resolution features and their impact in communication.

While Brown and Levinson provide Politeness Theory as the collective strategies, different cultures have different politeness norms. Brown and Levinson's theory is biased, as it inclines more on the western culture (Matsumoto, 1988:5) without putting much focus on other cultures around the world. Leech (Leech, 2000:3) counters Matsumoto's statement as he argues that there is no absolute split of east and west in politeness. This therefore makes it useful in educational institutions and learning but remains unclear on smooth conversations. In a social relationship people must learn the principles of cultural interactions with others in varied environments i.e. hierarchical relations, business conversations among others.

Politeness can be termed as a fixed concept; It can specifically be termed as polite social etiquette or behaviour within a culture (Yule, 1996:138). According to Yule, politeness can be said to be a range of social codes that express politeness in any social interaction. He further defines politeness as a special way of using language which focuses on smooth communication, self-fulfilment and self-defence of the individual in interaction with other communicating individuals. (Kitamura, 2000:6). work documents that; politeness can generally be identified in two categories; positive politeness which goes hand in hand with direct conduct and negative politeness which employs indirect conduct. (Svarova, 2008:6), documents that politeness strategies can as well be termed as either formal politeness, that reflects social etiquette, or informal politeness, that points to close relationships between members of a family or close relationships.

The direct conduct concept is based on direct speaking and direct behaviour. In the conversation or dialogue, the addresser is impolite since the situation allows them to do so or because of urgency of the situation. Simply, requests or commands, Since short commands e.g. *Look out!*, signal high degree of urgency, the concept is widely used for cautioning especially if time does not allow to think about appropriate language. The direct conduct is applicable in circumstances where the participants are familiar with each other.

Positive politeness on the other hand is a way of expressing oneness and an act of commiseration towards the target audience. It can be described as a way of appreciating addressee's positive face or a way of acknowledging shared positive values (Svarova, 2008:4). This kind of communication is observed in familiar and friendly conversations in

which the speaker and audience are relatively close but still, there is a social gap between the interlocutors. Expressions that incite a polite atmosphere such as “*on record*” are commonly used in spoken language. Under positive politeness, nice topics or topics that provoke nice feelings are preferred.

Indirect conduct is different from the common language because the statements are either confusing or misleading. The indirect conduct goes hand in hand with devices such as rhetorical questions, (e.g. *who cares!*), irony (e.g. *just on time as always!*), tautologies or incomplete sentences (e.g. *and then he came and...*) the interpretation of such statements is exclusively dependent on the addresser-addressee relationship as the closer the relationship between them the less confusing the utterance is likely to be perceived.

Being indirect means providing more options for the addressee, the addresser avoids conflicts by vacillating and softening the utterances with conventional devices such as modality and indirect questions (Ogiermann’s 2009:191). The addresser is usually very indirect in this conversation to avoid harming the addressee negative face while at the same time ensuring the compromise to satisfy one’s needs. The intended communication is carefully introduced with polite phrases such as *sorry to bother you, but...*, *Could you be so kind...* Mostly, negative politeness is used on formal social occasions and is an indicator of unfamiliarity between the participants or their social status difference (Svarova, 2008:3). According to Brown & Levinson, (1987), the fundamental characteristic in negative politeness is the respect that addresser has towards the addressee, giving him or her liberty to react freely; to agree or to disagree.

Formal politeness applies complex grammatical structures whose implications are understandable only within the situational context. A formally expressed polite request usually has an apology at the same time e.g. *I understand it is a terrible imposition but would it be possible for me to come to your house on Tuesday morning? I will appreciate.* In other instances, polite request may be presented with distancing too, e.g. *I was just pondering whether it could be possible for us to meet tomorrow.* If it were informal conversation, a similar request would be expressed directly e.g. *let’s meet tomorrow afternoon, shall we?* Informal politeness tend to be characterized by dispassionateness e.g. *What about meeting tomorrow afternoon?* (Svarova, 2008: 2)

When expressing informal politeness this is done by simple and often economical grammatical and lexical devices. Deliberately, sentences are often vaguely formulated and

very short, for the meaning to remain inexplicit e.g. *I didn't find she was terribly helpful*. The expression of this kind produces a politeness impression often connected to doubt. This form of politeness may indicate the wider difference in status of the interlocutors. In her work, (Svarova, 2008:3) opines that formal politeness can be an equivalent of negative politeness while informal politeness may be termed as positive politeness. Nevertheless, the two scenarios provide a complex understanding of the topic and offer us with unique approaches to subjects under discussion. This research will use the four categories of politeness above for a comprehensive analysis of the participant's nature of politeness.

1.8.4. Leech's Politeness Maxims and Scale.

There is need to appreciate the centrality of politeness in communication and to mind how other people feel. Holmes defines politeness as being respectful and avoiding offending another person (Holmes, 2013:4) the use of different approaches in language is important in enhancing efficiency in communication. Lakoff provides a summarized definition of politeness in three rules "do not impose, give options and make the addressee feel good". Lakoff's definition is similar with Leech's belief of what courteous language should be. Holmes definition of what politeness should be and the three rules by Lakoff is in line with how the study approaches and defines politeness. Watts' work on politeness has a lot of bearing on this research, the six maxims of politeness is a criterion the research employs in its evaluation of what entails politeness.

As documented by (Watts 2008:68), there are six maxims of politeness principles which when well integrated and adhered to during interlocutory process, then it helps in avoiding conflicts. These maxims therefore are important in incorporating politeness and subsequently they help in gauging politeness, these maxims are; the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim and the sympathy maxim. The concept of cost benefit scale is key to the six maxims, the tact maxim involves the addresser minimising the cost and maximising the benefit to the addressee this also applies to the generosity maxim which centres on the speaker minimising benefit to self and maximising cost to self. In the modesty maxim one is encouraged to minimise praise of self /maximise dispraise to self. The modesty maxim goes hand in hand with the approbation maxim which states that one should minimise dispraise to others/maximise praise of other. Sympathy maxim on the other hand emphasises the need to minimise antipathy between self and others / maximise sympathy between self and others. Watts, further explains that for an utterance to

be termed as polite the speaker has to minimise disagreement between himself/herself and the hearer and maximise agreement between himself/herself and the hearer (Watts 2003:67).

Watts explains that there are scales of delicacy which work side by side with the maxims above which are; the cost-benefit scale, optionality scale, indirectness scale, authority scale and social distance scale (Watts, 2003:68). “The central concept in Leech’s model is that of a cost-benefit scale of politeness related to both the speaker and the hearer. Politeness according to Leech, involves minimising the cost and maximising the benefit to the speaker/hearer.” (Watts, 2003:66). The cost benefit scale is the same as the tact maxim. As (Watts, 2003:68) explains, the cost benefit scale also involves other related scales such as the agreement-disagreement scale which advocates for amicable existence. The social distance scale shows how conversant the addresser and the addressee are, (Holmes 2013:5) “as the social distance increases so does the negative politeness.” Authority scale points out the ranking assumed by the hearer in relation to the speaker, a person in authority can impose on their juniors while the juniors lack that power. In a school setup the authority scale comes into play as there are different levels of rankings in a school. Watts’ work summarily points to the fact that all maxims revolve around cost-benefit scale. For a person to be polite they should aim at reducing cost and increasing benefit. This study examines how the participants minimize/ maximize cost & benefit.

The optionality scale rates politeness based on the amount of choice the speaker allows the hearer, (Watts, 2003:68; Leech, 2000:7) the hearer is given a wide range of possible responses/feedbacks which is formed by self judgement of the speaker’s needs. While the speaker may have needs as per say, the hearer’s needs are considered and he or she is given room not only to consider the speaker’s needs but also hearer’s needs. Watts puts this flexibility to be able to say yes or no to a request in optionality scale. When an utterance gives you an option of saying yes or no then it is deemed as being polite. Similarly, the lesser the options the hearer has, the less polite the speaker is considered to be. The indirectness scale is rated from the speaker’s point of view, on this scale, ordering of the illocutions is with respect to the length of the path (in terms of means-end analysis) connecting the illocutionary act to its illocutionary goal (Belza 2008:54)

In his opinion, Leech avers that politeness is important in helping maintain friendly relations and enabling the interlocutors cooperate. Leech states that for one to be polite he/she needs to reduce the usage of impolite statements or expressions and maximize the usage of polite

illocutions (Leech, 1983: 83). This cooperation is what aids in accomplishing communication as documented by (Kindiki 2009:256; Lunenburg, 2010:4; Nair & Joglekar, 2012:2) in understanding the politeness among interlocutors.

1.8.5. Speech Act Theory and Communication

“All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts” as Belza elaborates, speaking involves performing these acts (Belza, 2008:23) some acts are inherently polite, for example apologising, thanking, and offering as opposed to reprimanding, advising and threatening and as such Leech advises a speaker to always pick polite acts over impolite ones (Leech, 1983:83). Similar to Belza’s work the study analyses how the participants use the different speech acts, when they are likely to use one over the other and the impact it has on communication.

According to J.L. Austin, to say something is to do something. As such all utterances are divided into either performative utterances or constative utterances which according to his work could not be clearly distinguished from each other and as such he termed all utterances as performatives. He classifies them into five types; verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives and behavitives (Araki, 2018:2; Lakoff, 1977:27). In his work, (Austin 1975:6) argued that it is not useful to ask whether performative utterances are true or not; but rather we should ask whether they work or not. According to the work, a performative that works is called a *felicitous*, while one that does not is *infelicitous*. For performatives to work, they need to satisfy social conventions. Simply put, there are social principles governing the code of communication in any environment ranging from giving orders to co-workers, greeting strangers among others. According to (Austin 1975:13-14), the enabling conditions necessary for a performative is what is known as *Yule conditions*.

In the course of his work Austin realized that other than the semantics of an act, utterances also carry out special functions through having special forces. An utterance will always perform a locutionary act, an illocutionary act or a perlocutionary act (Brown & Levinson, 1983: 236). Making an utterance that is grammatically correct in all the senses is what Austin called locutionary, while the illocutionary act is the performance of an act in saying something for example threatening, promising or swearing and the perlocutionary act is the effect produced by a speech act whether on purpose or not like convincing or persuading.

Following Austin’s work, Searle further developed on it, he came up with a systematic identification of the acts, improving on Austins’ criteria of classifying acts. Searle first

fronted twelve groupings which the acts could be placed among them; style, the illocutionary point, the illocutionary force and the discourse related function. (Baktir, 2016:6) talks of the illocutionary point concept, considering two different speech acts: an ‘order’ and a ‘request’, which are both directives, having the same point, are distinguished by a difference in illocutionary force. With the request having diminished force than an order and for that a request is considered to be more polite. The way and how you say something is more important than what is said, this is what Searle termed as style.

As discussed below, Searle later gives five categories based on functions in which all the acts fit; Representatives entail acts that state the belief of the speaker. Their face value is depicted by the “*true or false*” e.g. *She is arrogant*. Directives include the kind of utterances that a speaker can use to make someone else do something. They can be commands; requests, suggestions etc. e.g. *pass me that pen*. Commissives on the other hand involve the speaker committing to some action in future. They communicate the intention of the speaker e.g. *I’ll return your pen*. Expressives aid in giving the state or feelings of the speaker. They express psychological states e.g. *I am sorry sir!* While declaratives entails speech acts that change the world through their utterances, e.g. *I declare Mary the winner in Form one*. Speech acts can therefore be said to be actions happening in the world (Baktir, 2016: 2; Mey, 2001:16).

Each and every type of speech act can be realized by means of another act, in other words, the speaker says what the sentence means, and something else as well. Searle refers to the function typically performed by the act as primary act and the addition function as the secondary act. As documented by (Belza, 2008:39), Yule divides speech acts into direct and indirect speech acts. He argues that direct speech acts occur when there is a direct relationship between structure and function while when there is an indirect relationship between function and structure that is an indirect speech act. Based on this argument, a declarative sentence used to make a statement is an example of a direct speech act while a declarative sentence used to make a request is an indirect speech act. As such, this can refer back to Brown and Levinson’s assertion that “*what people do with sentences seems quite unrestricted by the type of the sentence uttered*”. The interpretation of a given sentence can be difficult, but not indefinite e.g. *go to London!* This can be a command, instruction, advice and many more (Belza, 2008:40; Brown and Levinson, 1987). In order to interpret indirect acts appropriately there is need to put context into consideration the felicity conditions must also be fulfilled and the conversational cooperation principle observed. Indirect speech acts are also considered to be more polite than the direct speech acts (Kravchenko, 2017:61)

(Lakoff 1977). This is true especially when we use an interrogative for example to do the work of a directive in this case indirectness is at the centre of enhancing politeness. When indirectness is favourable to the hearer (Leech 2000:8) and at the same time the speaker strikes a delicate balance between indirectness and clarity then politeness can be said to be the motive of being indirect.

1.9. Theoretical Framework

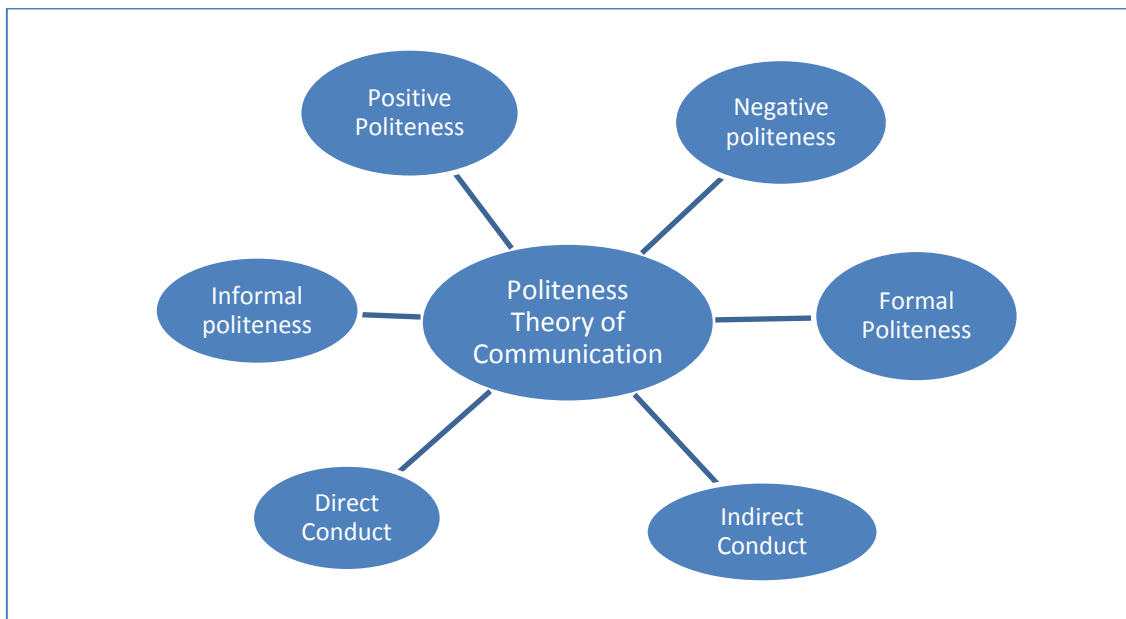
According to (Marian-Eduard 2017:2), a teacher in the modern society and in the course of delivering his or her duties no longer has a simple role as having the specialized knowledge and psycho-pedagogical knowledge. As a teacher, one is required to pass the teachings in a learner-specific language varying from time to time based on the learning environment. In our day to day lives, we perform speech acts by requesting, apologizing, greeting, complaining among many other activities. As such, communication in educational environment is premised on a language as a higher mental process and is meant to facilitate the transfer of information to the student from the teacher while providing room for student to give feedback to the teacher. All this is done while both the teacher and the student consider the other person's feelings, thoughts and concerns. It has been observed that, teachers who possess good communication skills create a friendly environment for students' learning and their work as well (Duta, Panisoara, and Panisoara, 2015:1010). This is dependent on the communication strategy employed by the teacher.

Conversations in school can occur in two major ways. This can either be between students and fellow students or between teachers and learners. Communication can also happen between learners and their parents/guardians. The study used both the qualitative and quantitative research method design. An open and close ended questionnaire was issued to the participants; teachers and students in this case, the responses given (quantitative) was fed to the excel spread sheet and processed, while the qualitative responses interpreted appropriately.

During conversation interest of one interlocutor may conflict with that of the other, leading them to acts such as making requests, offering proposals or issuing threats. For a request to be made, a speaker must commit a FTA, consequently there will be need for a redress action and the speaker will either employ positive or negative politeness strategy to do so. Where no FTA is committed then no redress is needed. Formal politeness is usually used when there is social distance as in this case between teacher and students while informal politeness tends to

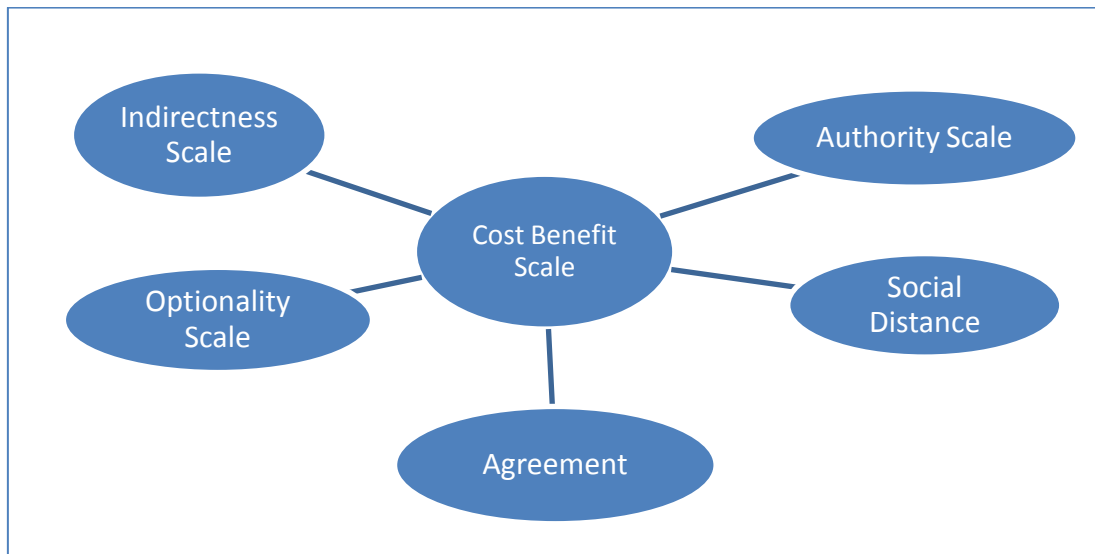
be used between students and students or between teachers and teachers. The direct contact is less polite, during interlocution indirectness is used in order to sound polite and to enhance harmonious interlocutory relationship. Below is an illustration of the strategies mentioned above.

Figure 2: Forms of Politeness Theory in Communication



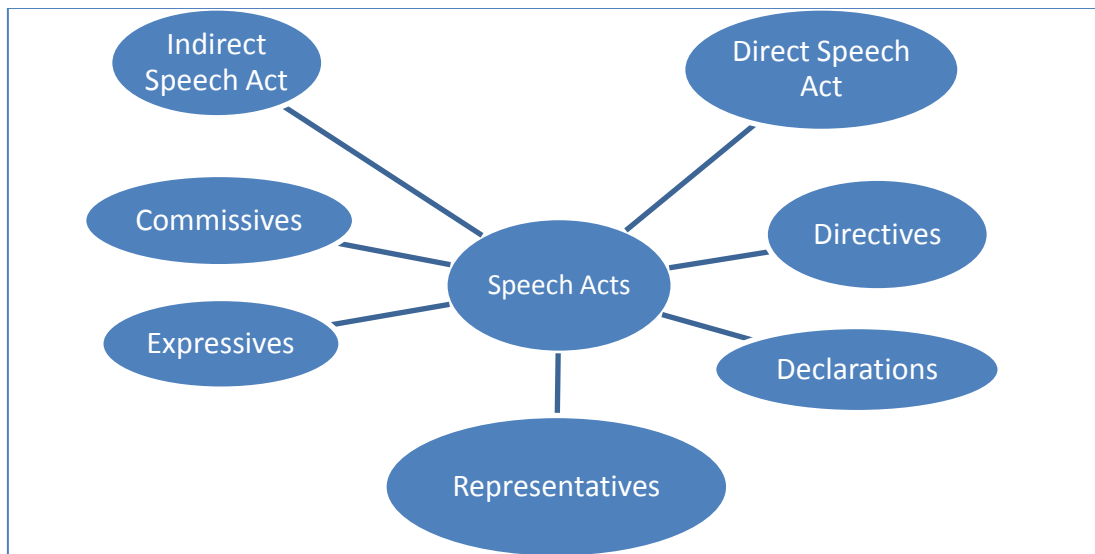
As watts puts it, linguistic politeness is expressed through various forms of language structure and usage, these structures enable interlocutors with shared mission and vision to attain desired results. The Politeness Principle guides interlocutors in sustaining a harmonious relationship, this is done when one considers the notion of cost benefit scale which summarily involves “maximizing the benefit to self and other, minimizing the face-threatening nature of a social act, displaying adequate proficiency in the accepted standards of social etiquette, avoiding conflict, making sure that the social interaction runs smoothly (Watts, 2003:66). The politeness principle encourages the use of positive politeness dominantly and minimizing the use of negative politeness (Leech, 1983: 81). As shown in figure 3 below cost benefit scale is at the centre of The Politeness Principle.

Figure 3: Cost Benefit Scale



Speech has many roles depending with the occasion which it is used, this varies from one context to the other. For example, the speech one hears from people shifting a machine; “*to him Now slightly left ... to the right.*” The speech act depicted here controls people’s physical behaviour. When a lecture is on-going, the role of speech in the context is never meant to influence the listener’s actions, but their thoughts. Besides the above roles, (Baktir, 2013:3) documents Di Pietro 1994’s work that asserts speech as a medium for establishing or reinforcing social relations meant to recognize the presence of each other. Summarily, speech can be used to get information, to ask someone to do something, for expression of emotions, to promise someone something or for its own sake, these functions largely fall into five categories which are; representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations as documented by (Mey, 2001:6), (Searl 1969:119) ; Yule also gave further subdivision of the acts into either direct or indirect this is based on the relationship of structure of sentence type and the function it performs. These speech acts categories as they are illustrated below, do shape conversation day in and day out in school.

Figure 4: Functions of Speech Acts in Communication



An effective communication strategy serves as a blueprint to an authentic and timely conveyance of information between the addresser and the addressee. The communication strategies outline objectives of the communication, participants in the communication, identify the key message, and provide for the methods of communications and the vehicles for communicating information and the mechanism for providing feedback after communication. While a communication strategy may not be a mandatory precursor for communication, it enhances the process of communication making exchanging of information and feedback easier. Teachers who develop sound and systematic communication strategies get to know their learners better and the learners as well get to learn well from the teachers. In their work, (Duta et al., 2015) concluded that a teacher’s communication style can influence the attitude and interest of student in creating a fun and learning atmosphere.

The form of communication can therefore take one in any of the above theoretical models; The Politeness Theory of Communication, Politeness Principle or Speech Act Theory. The speech of the study participants was analysed based on either of the above criterions. The three theoretical models provided a powerful tool for analysis. The analysis was based on the feedback that the participants gave in their questionnaires. The participants were allowed to give answers in a way they understood and thought appropriate. Putting politeness into consideration, we can summarily say that people not only learn from their actions but also from actions of others. According to (Kindiki 2009:256,257), schools use different forms of communication differently. Schools do not rely on one form of communication alone.

1.10. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1.10.1. Study Area

This study was conducted in Bahati sub-county located in Nakuru County, Kenya (*see appendix 1*), located in the former Rift Valley Province. Nakuru County has 11 sub counties, 294 public secondary schools and 101 private secondary schools with a total population enrolment of 110,025 learners. Bahati Sub County has 63 secondary schools (www.nakuru.go.ke).

1.10.2. Study Population

The study population included form one learners and teachers in the selected schools found within Bahati Sub County in Nakuru County. This is because form one students get admission mostly while naive of the new environment unaware of the norms. They have to learn to adapt and as such, courtesy in their language is usually essential for their integration in the new environment.

1.10.3. Study Design

The study used a mixed method research design which includes both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects. Quantitative data includes some of the demographic data and the answers from close ended questions such as sentence typologies and politeness markers. The quantitative data being measurable, was compiled and then processed in an excel spread sheet® for analysis. The qualitative data from open ended questions such as use of modals and external modifiers was also analysed and interpreted appropriately to give a summative conclusion on nature of participants. Data was sought from learners and teachers in both public and private secondary schools in Bahati Sub County, Nakuru County. The information collected was then analysed for documentation of the findings.

1.10.4. Sampling and Sample Size Determination

The study adopted a purposive sampling and systematic random sampling techniques in three schools within Bahati Sub County. Purposive sampling entails deliberately picking students and schools after putting in some considerations. Systemic random sampling is where one picks students at random though you pick them at regular intervals. The three schools picked are situated at different parts of the sub county. Mixed schools which are both day and boarding were selected for the study as they give a reflection of the various schools in Kenya. The choice of the integrated schools was done with the above considerations in mind. Form one learners, students in the student executive council, and class teachers were sampled. A

purposive sampling was important as student council and class teachers interact frequently with the form one students and also at different levels. The remaining learners in form one were selected randomly to fill a questionnaire. The sampling was done among all the form one students and a minimum of forty students from each school was included in the study. The student to fill the questionnaire was determined by the following formulae;

$$N = \frac{\text{Total number of form one students in the selected school}}{40}$$

Where N, is the interval of choosing the student to fill the questionnaire

Therefore, after every N student as per the sitting arrangement in class, the student was given a questionnaire to fill. Form one teachers also filled questionnaires in the three schools.

1.10.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The participants in the study were form one student executive council representatives, form one class teachers and form one learners in the class chosen at random. Learners in the upper classes were not involved in the study as well as teachers who did not have lessons with form one learners when the study was conducted.

1.10.6. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection involved the use of questionnaires. Both open ended and close ended questionnaires were used (*see appendix 3*).

1.10.7. Data Analysis

The socio demographic data and the quantitative data collected was entered in an excel spread sheet® then processed. Qualitative data was documented appropriately and interpreted.

1.10.8. Ethical Considerations

School management was informed of intended administration of questionnaires prior to the questionnaire sessions. Consent was also sought from the participants before inclusion in the study. Participants' private information was not included in the questionnaire and any other such information that could lead to the identification of the participants.

CHAPTER TWO

FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES.

2.1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

The study had 147 participants in total with majority of participants being male ($n=80$) and Female were ($n=66$) while one participant opted not to declare gender ($n=1$). The table below summarises the characteristics of the study participants;

Table 1: The demographic characteristics of the participants.

Age	Male	Female	Undisclosed Gender	Teaching Staff	Learners
14-19	75	61	1	0	137
20-24	2	0	0	2	0
25-30	1	3	0	4	0
Above 30	2	2	0	4	0
Total	80	66	1	10	137

Source: Researcher data

2.2. Responses to the Close Ended Questions

The questionnaire included close ended questions that targeted to get specific answers from the respondent. Close ended questions are multiple choice questions that restrict the respondent on the answer to give. Though the choices are several, the respondent does not have freedom of answering as he or she wishes. The feedback was used to give a rating of the politeness based on The Politeness Theory, Speech Act Theory and The Politeness Principal. Restricting the choices, is important in having a controlled range of answers that would otherwise be diverse, this enhances easy rating on the scales, the choices were availed based on both extremities of the scales and the balance of the two extremes.

The responses from the close ended questions were analysed based on gender as well as teacher versus student. The study compares the respondents' choices and rates them on the three models of politeness. Since politeness is gradable, the scales help us rate them from the most polite to least polite. The study does this by limiting the response the respondents give to ensure that the options are aligned to a common situation.

2.2.1 Situation 1

The participants were provided with five options to choose from when borrowing a pen from a classmate or a colleague. Below is the representation of the participant's choices in situation 1.

The choices participants prefer to use when borrowing.

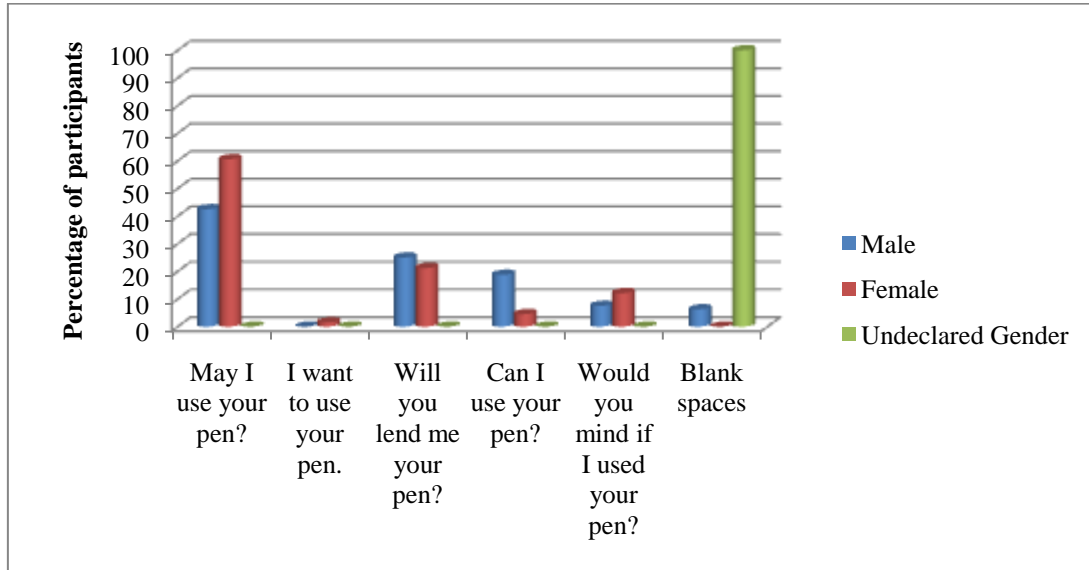


Figure 5: Comparison by gender when borrowing an item

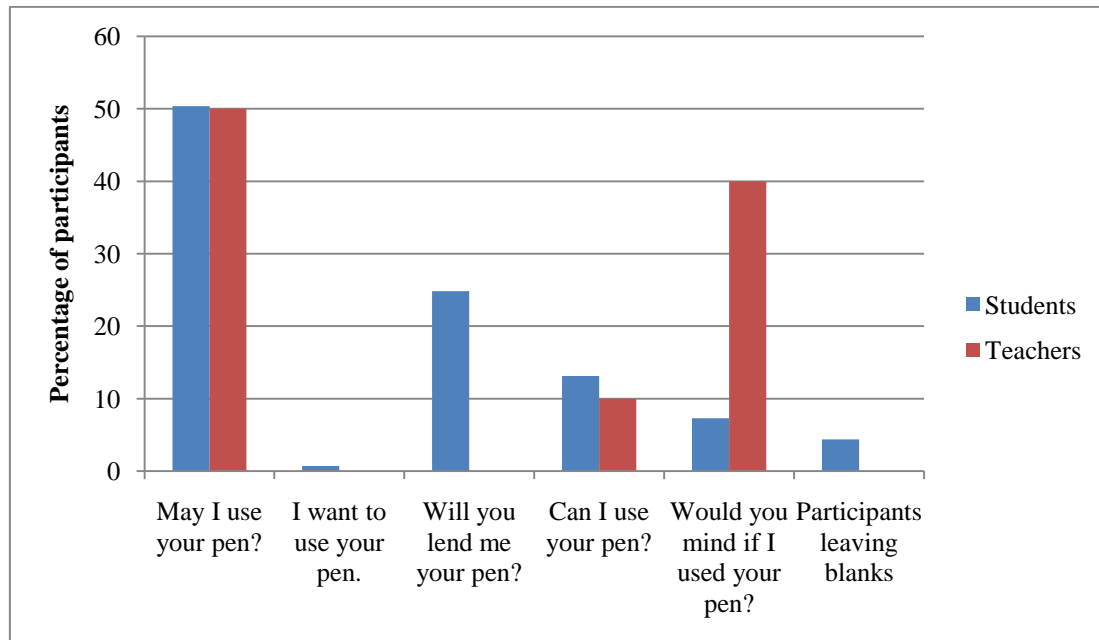


Figure 6: Comparison of teachers and students on use of different acts when borrowing

Where *m* is for male, *f* for female and *u.g* for undisclosed gender, the options were formulated based on the *optionality scale, indirectness and different illocutionary acts*. From *figure 5* and *figure 6* above, 50.34% of the study participants would prefer to say *may I use your pen?* Compared to 9.52% of the study participants, who preferred to use *would you mind if I used your pen?* In the same context, *will you lend me your pen?* *Can I use your pen?* And *I want to use your pen* were used by 23.13%, 12.24% and 0.68% respectively. 4.08% of the participants did not opt for any of the above choices nor gave alternatives of their opinions.

2.2.2. Situation 2

In situation two, the participants were provided with five options which they were required to arrange from the most preferred to the least preferred when requesting a person to answer a phone.

The most preferred choice used when making a request.

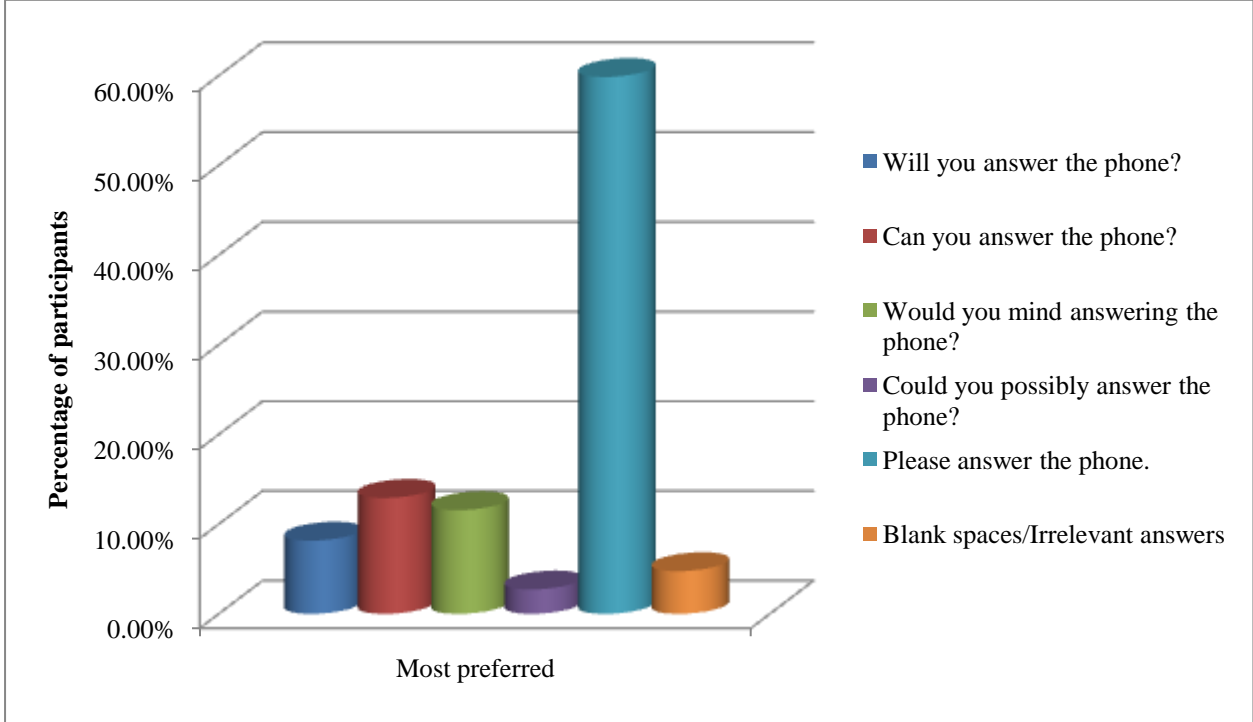


Figure 7: Preference of use of different acts of requesting (most preferred)

An almost similar pattern to *situation 1* was observed with an instance of asking another person to answer a phone. The phone situation either depicts how the speaker would address the hearer if the phone was causing a nuisance by ringing or if the speaker in a way needed help from the hearer in answering the phone. According to *figure 7* above, a majority of the

study participants, on the most preferred choice, 59.86 % preferred *Please answer the phone*. Of the remaining participants, 12.93%, 11.56%, 8.16% and 2.72% had their preferred choices as; *Can you answer the phone?*, *Would you mind answering the phone?*, *Will you answer the phone?*, and *Could you possibly answer the phone?*, respectively. Those who left blanks are 4.76%. Most preferred choices give the speaker less options and are more direct. This generally makes the study participants to be characteristically described as less polite.

The least preferred choice when making a request.

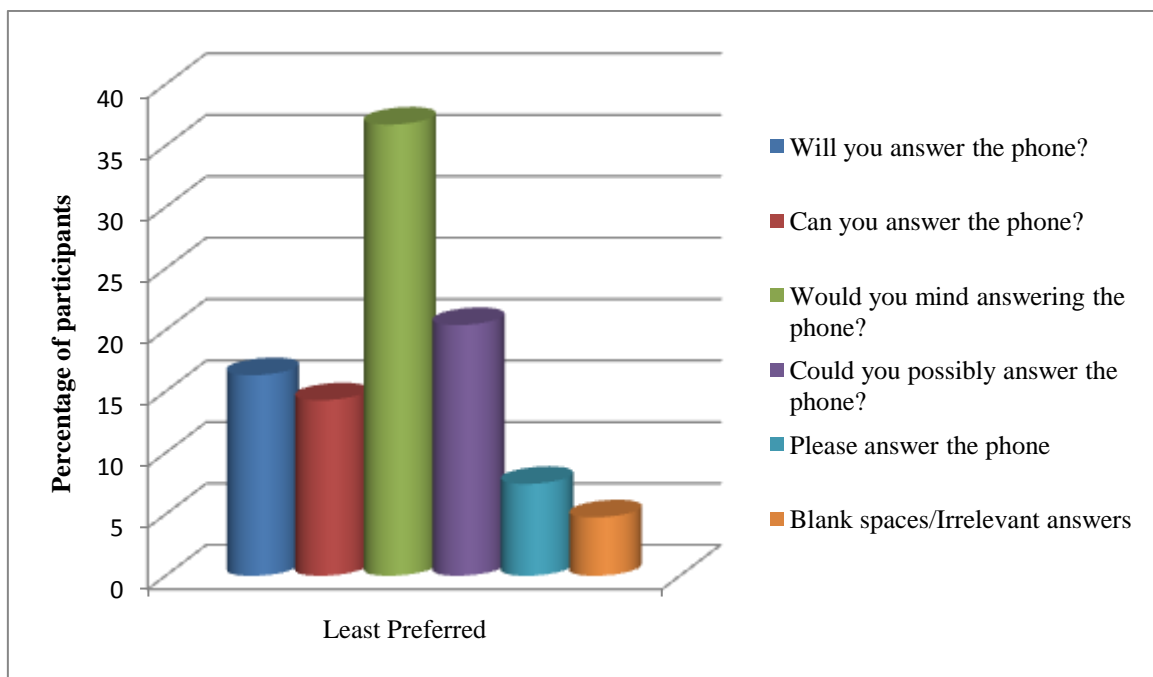


Figure 8: Preference of use of different acts of requesting (least preferred)

Of the choices on answering the phone, *figure 8* demonstrates the participants' least preferred choice (one that they would use as their last choice), *would you mind answering the phone?*, was the least preferred with 36.73% indicating they would use it last among the options. 20.41% would have least preferred *could you possibly answer the phone?* *Will you answer the phone?* 16.33%, 14.29% least preferred *Can you answer the phone?*, and 7.48% *Please answer the phone* 4.76% opted for no choices from the available list or could only tick one instead of arranging in the order of priority from most preferred.

The most preferred choice by students and teachers when making a request.

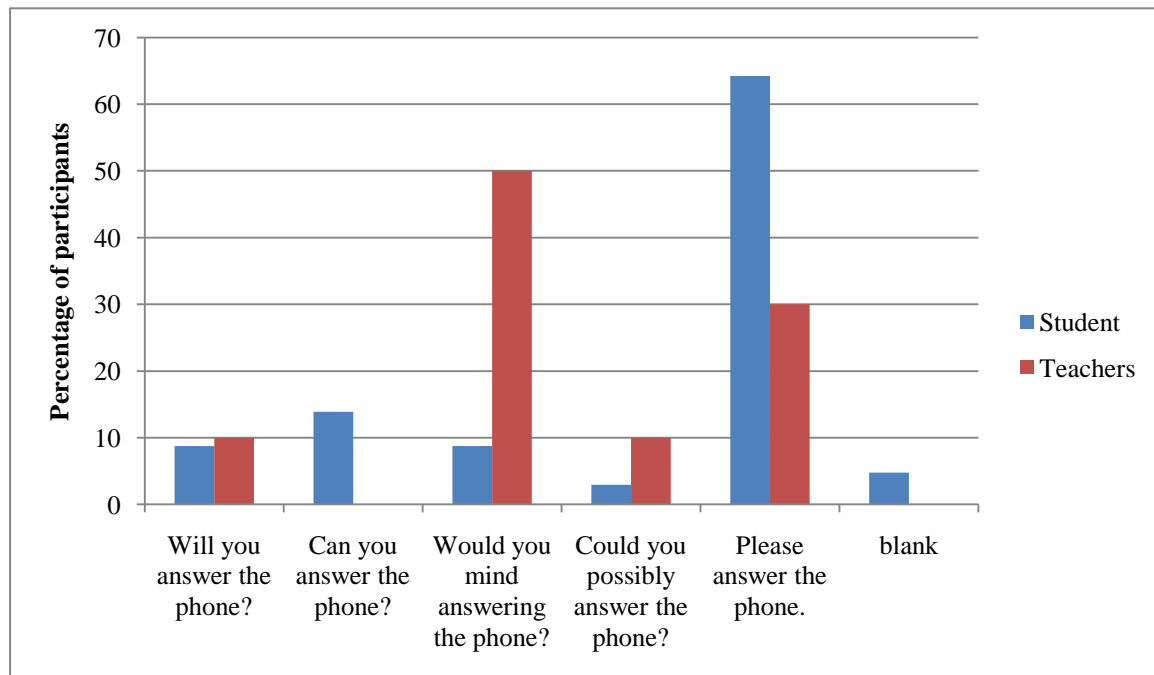


Figure 9: Comparison of use of different acts between teachers and students when asking for help in answering a phone.

Figure 9 above is a representation of how teachers when compared to students would request someone to answer a phone, on the most preferred choice, 59.86 % preferred *please answer the phone*. Of the remaining participants, 12.93% 11.56%, 8.16%, and 2.72 had their preferred choices as; *Can you answer the phone?*, *Would you mind answering the phone?*, *Will you answer the phone?* and *Could you possibly answer the phone?* respectively. Those who left blanks are 4.76%. There is a clear difference between what teachers picked as their most preferred choice and what students picked as most preferred. The students most preferred choice is *please answer the phone* which is at 64.23% followed by *can you answer the phone* which is at 14% the other three choices are each below 10%. The choice that was most popular with the teachers is *would you mind answering the phone* at 50% followed by *please answer the phone* at 30% the other two are each at 10%.

2.3 Responses to Open Ended Questions.

While close ended questions limit the responses the respondents give, open ended questions do not limit the way the respondents answer the questions. These questions do not have multiple choices and so the respondents have to give their responses as they find appropriate. Unlike close ended questions where the respondents can guess the answers for the sake of completing the questionnaire, in open ended the respondents have to write down what they

asses to be appropriate or what they find to be correct. As such, open ended questions reflect the opinions of the respondents in a manner they understand best.

2.3.1. Situation 3

In situation three the participants were required to write down how they would verbally request a friend to open a window.

Usage of Politeness Markers and Sentence Typologies

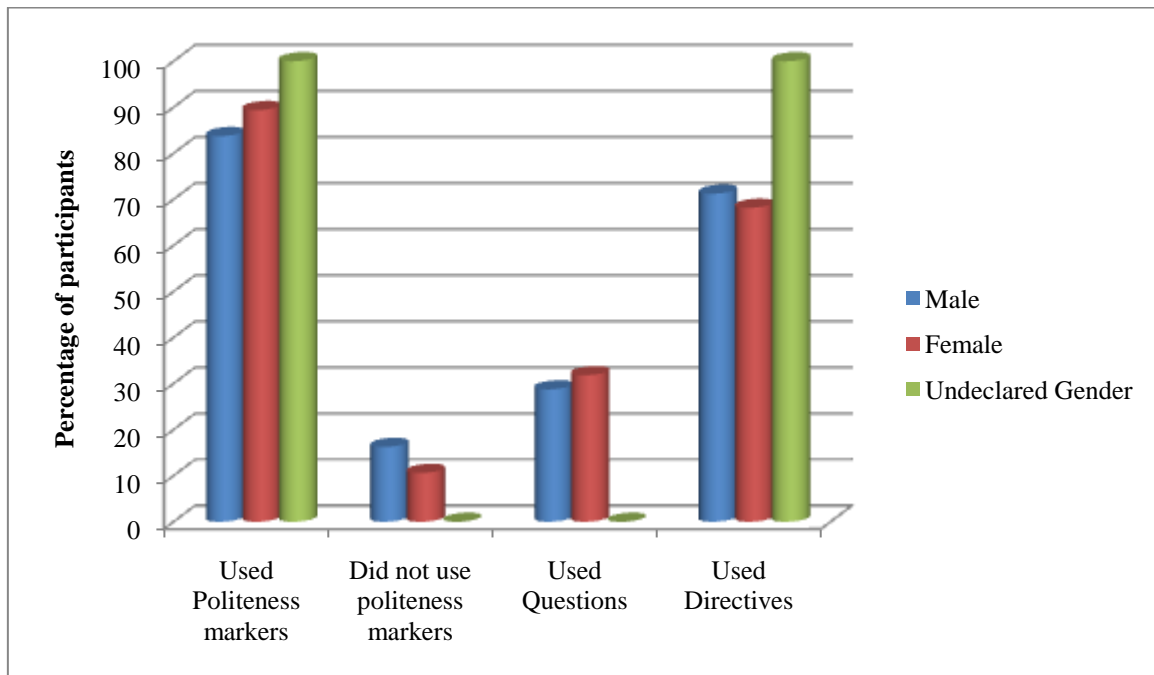


Figure 10: Comparison of politeness markers by gender when asking a friend to open a window.

When requesting a friend to open a window, 86.39% of the study participants, used the following politeness markers in their sentences; *please, kindly* and *excuse me* while 13.61% of the study participants, did not use any politeness marker in their expressions. Of all the answers given 29.93%, *preferred to use questions in their requests* while 70.07%, *preferred to use directives*, See *figure 10*. Out of the 20 who did not use any politeness marker, male were 13 and 7 were female.

The politeness markers were used alongside different illocutionary acts with a little variation from one participant to the other. The positions of the politeness markers in the sentences were used interchangeably as discussed later in this section.

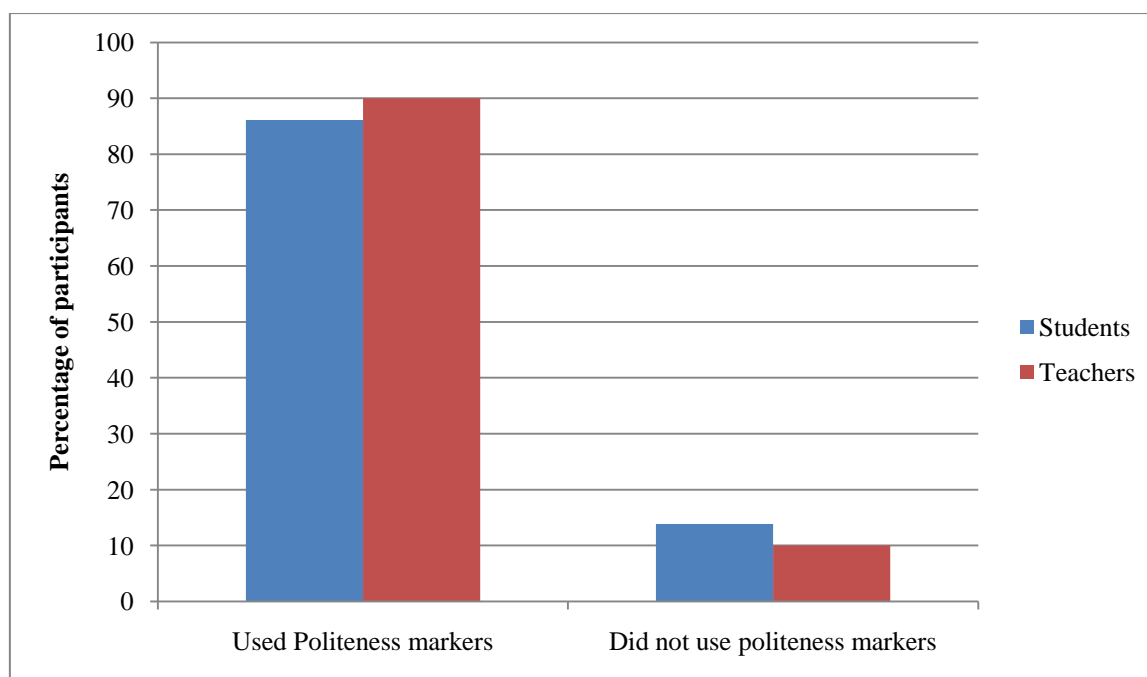


Figure 11: Comparison of use of politeness markers between teachers and students when asking a friend to close a window

Of the participating students, 86.13% used politeness markers while 13.87% did not use any politeness marker under student category. In comparison 90% of the participating teachers used politeness markers when passing a request while on 10% of the participating teachers did not use any politeness markers. As shown in *figure 11*, most of the participating teachers were courteous in their language when making a request compared to the number of participating students.

Participants in their responses in the above situation used the patterns below;

V+ NP + please/ please +V+ NP was used by 58 participants,

e.g. Please open the window

Please + can you+ infinitive clause or can you + infinitive clause+ please was used by 56 participants

e.g. please can you open that window?/.

V+NP was used by 20 participants

e.g. Open that window/can/could you open the window

Please +would you mind+ -ing form or would you mind + -ing clause+ please was used by 6 participants, e.g.

Please would you mind opening that window?

Please + will you+ infinitive clause or will you + infinitive clause+ please was used by 6 participants

e.g will you open that window please

Please + could you+ infinitive clause or could you + infinitive clause+ please was used by 1 participant

e.g could you open the window please it is too hot here.

Please was sometimes used with excuse me,

In no instance did any participant give a hint i.e. it is too hot here and the window is closed.

2.3.2. Situation 4

The participants were required to borrow a book from the library below is a chart of the representation of the responses given.

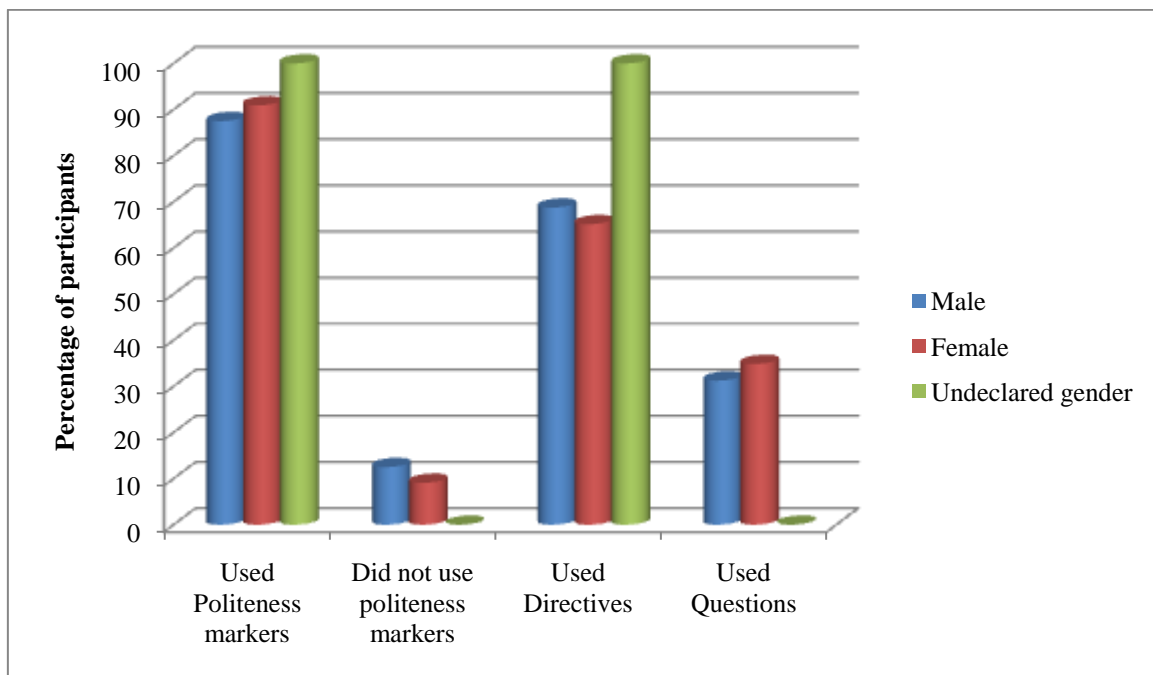


Figure 12: Use of different politeness markers by gender when borrowing

While borrowing, 89.12% used politeness markers, i.e. *please* and *excuse me*, while 10.88 % did not use any politeness marker in their requests to the librarian. Of the well responding participants, 32.65% asked for the book using a question while 67.35% asked for the book using a directive. As shown in *figure 12*, the males were less polite when borrowing a book from the library compared to the females. This is supported by the fact that they employed directives compared to females who used more of question sentence typologies.

The two main politeness markers used in this category were used with different sentences and their positions in sentences as well varied. While majority of the participants used directives in their responses, the stance was made polite by incorporation of politeness markers where they were used i.e. *please*.

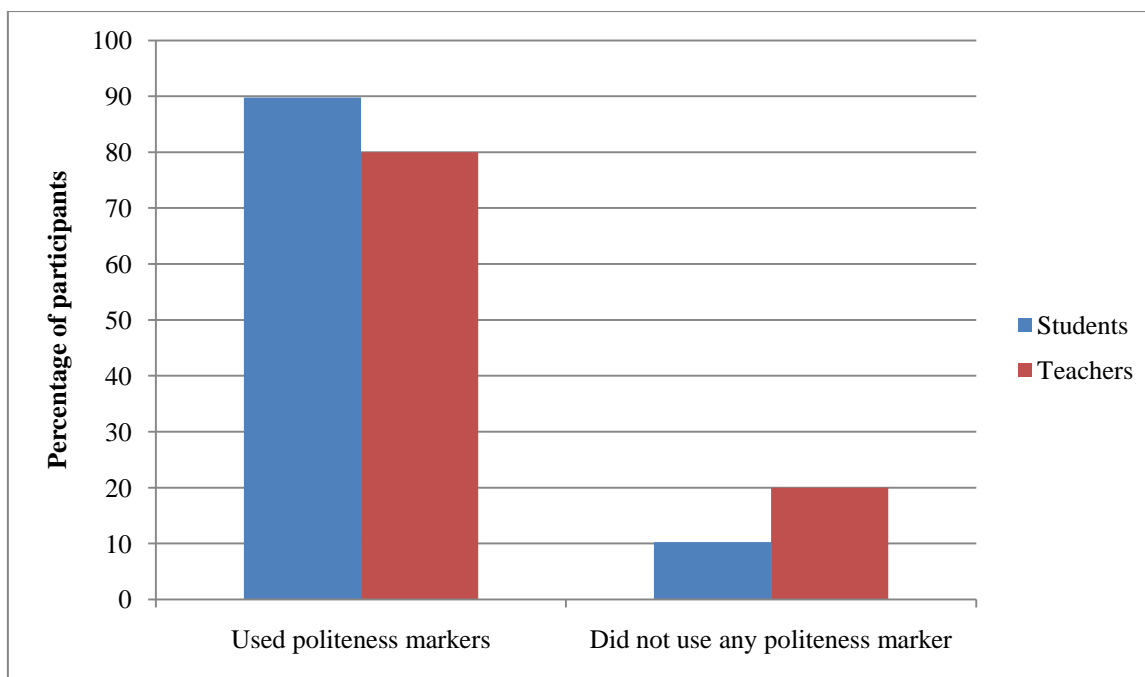


Figure 13: Comparison of use of politeness markers between teachers and students when borrowing

Of the participating 137 students and 10 teachers, 89.78% of students used politeness markers while 10.22% did not use any politeness markers, see *figure 13* above. The level of politeness depicted by the students is in sharp contrast with other situations. A total of 80% of the participating teachers used politeness markers when borrowing while 20% did not use any politeness marker when borrowing. The teachers were less polite in this instance compared to students.

Participants in their responses used the patterns below;

Please + may I + infinitive clause or may I + infinitive clause+ please was used by 40 participants e.g. *please may I borrow/have/use a text book. / ?*

V+ NP + please/ please +V+ NP was used by 37 participants e.g. *please assist/help me with book*

Please + can you+ infinitive clause or can you + infinitive clause+ please was used by 27 participants e.g. *can you assist/lend/give me a book please?*

Please + will you+ infinitive clause or will you + infinitive clause+ please was used by 16 participants e.g. *will you assist /give me book.....please*

V+NP was used by 16 participants e.g. *Can you give me book/ I need to use book.../assist me with book.....*

Please + would you mind+ -ing form or would you mind + -ing clause+ please was used by 11 participants e.g. please would you mind if I borrowed a book/would you mind lending me a book please?

In no instance did any participant give a hint i.e. I have an assignment I need to do and I do not have a book to use.

2.3.3. Situation 5

In an event where one has forgotten their keys at home and need to go for them, the participants sought permission from the deputy principal in various ways as demonstrated in the figure below.

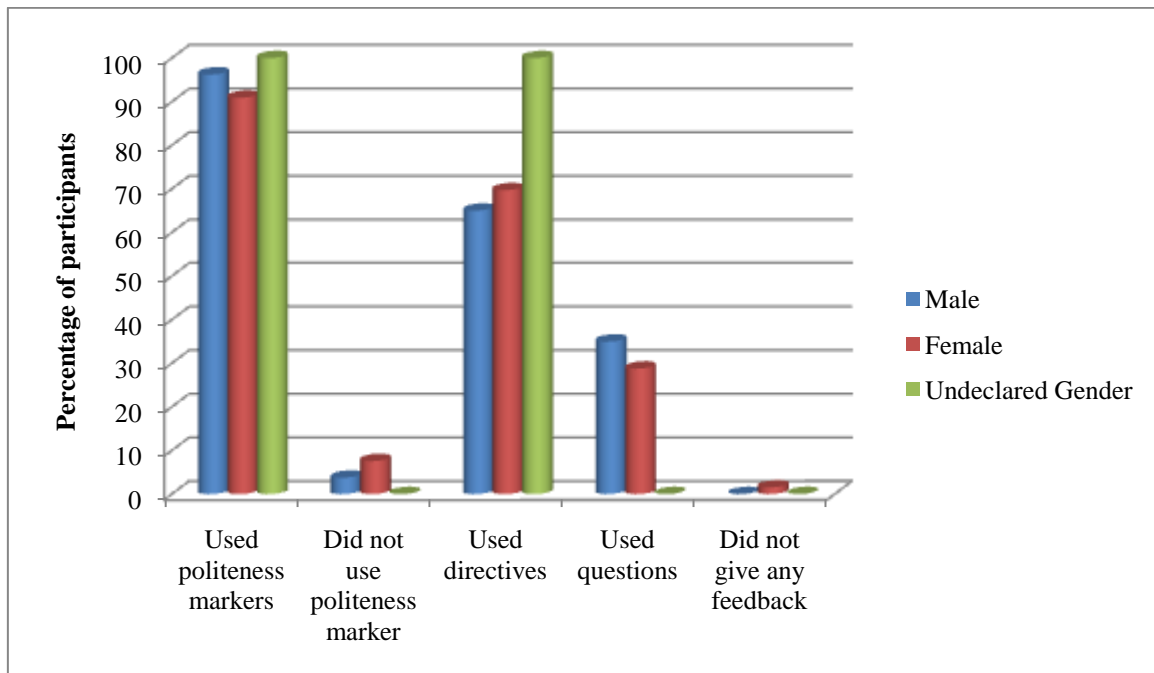


Figure 14: Comparison of use of politeness markers and sentence typologies by gender, when asking for permission.

As demonstrated in *figure 14* above, when asking permission to leave, 93.88% used politeness markers i.e. *please* and *excuse me* to express themselves to the deputy principal. 5.44% did not use any politeness marker in their sentences. 31.97% and 67.35% requested for permission by posing a *question* and using a *directive* respectively while 0.68% did not give any feedback and opted to leave blank.

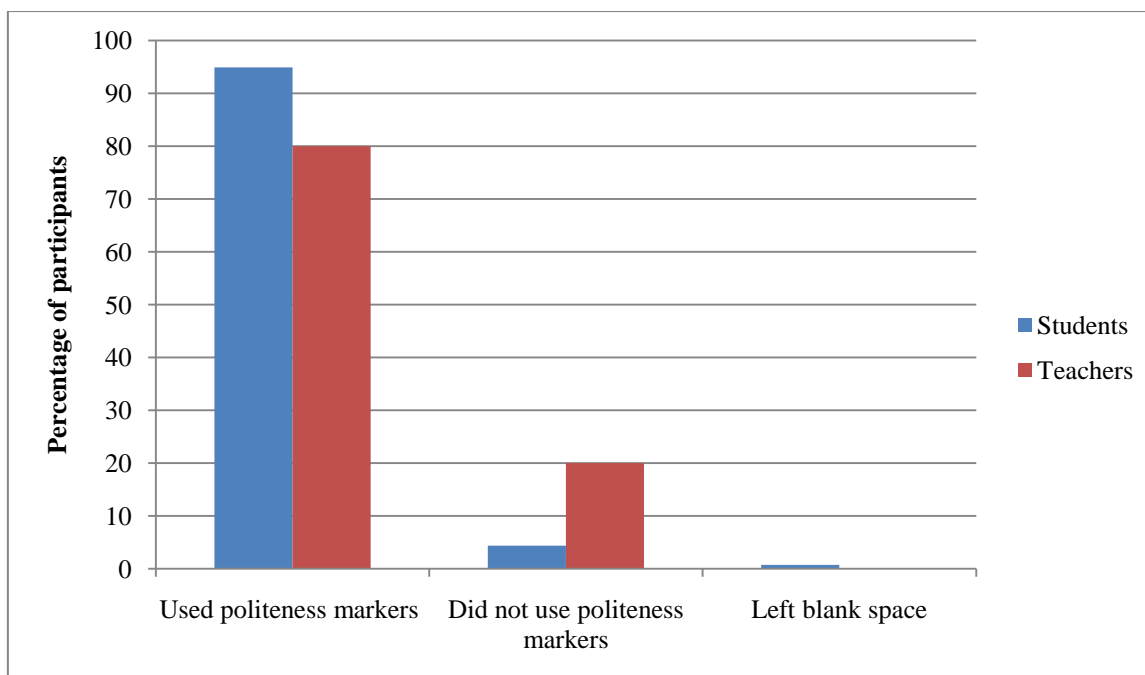


Figure 15: Comparison of use of politeness markers and sentence typologies when asking for permission (between teachers and students)

Compared to 94.89% of students who used politeness markers 4.38% who did not use any politeness markers and 0.73% who left blank, 80% of the teachers used politeness markers while 20% did not use any politeness marker in their responses as shown in *figure 15*. A higher percentage of students used politeness markers, this can be attributed to the wider social distance and absolute authority the deputy principal has over the students.

Participants in their responses used the patterns below;

Please + may I + infinitive clause or may I + infinitive clause+ please was used by 56 participants e.g. excuse me.....may I go home (reason) please.

Please + can/could you + infinitive clause or can you + infinitive clause+ please was used by 33 participants e.g. can/could you (kindly) allow/let/ give me permission to go home please?

V+ NP + please/ please +V+ NP was used by 27 participants e.g. please give me permission/allow me to go home(reason)

Would you + please + infinitive + to infinitive was used by 14 participants e.g. would you please allow/let /give me permission to go home....(reason)?

Please + will you+ infinitive clause or will you + infinitive clause + please was used by 8 participants e.g. will you allow, let /give me permission to go home please (reason)

V+NP was used by 8 participants e.g. Can I go home/may I go home..... (reason).

Following the sentence pattern shown above it is clear that most of the participants accompanied their responses with a reason as to why they needed to go home.

2.3.4 Situation 6

Figure 16 shows how the participants corrected a person in a scenario where they were mistaken for someone else.

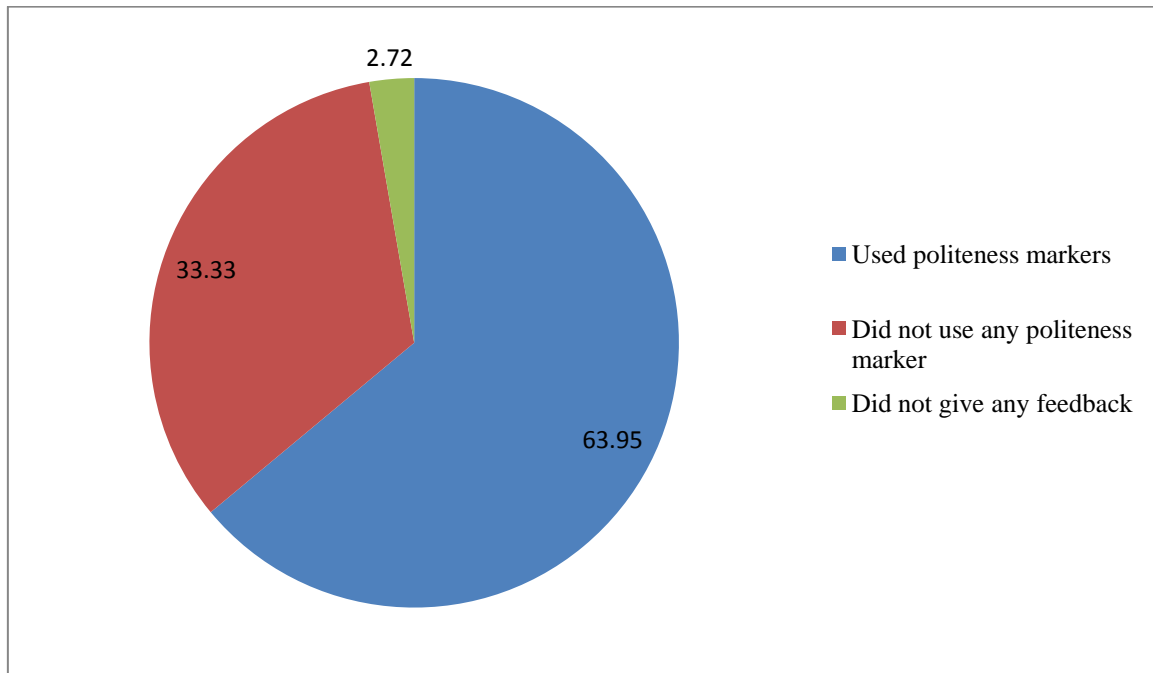


Figure 16: Use of politeness when giving corrections

When correcting/explaining to a person, the *figure above* demonstrates that 63.95% of the study participants used these politeness markers i.e. *please, sorry & pardon, excuse me* was also used alongside these politeness markers while 33.33% did not use any politeness markers and 2.72% did not give any feedback and opted to leave blank spaces.

Figure 17 below demonstrates that majority of teachers in the study, 70%, did not see the need of using any politeness marker when giving a correction. This can be attributed to the sense of entitlement when correcting those people, they felt that they were equals or they were superior to. An almost equivalent fraction of students, 66.42% used politeness markers when giving corrections. In this situation a higher percentage of students were more polite compared to the teachers.

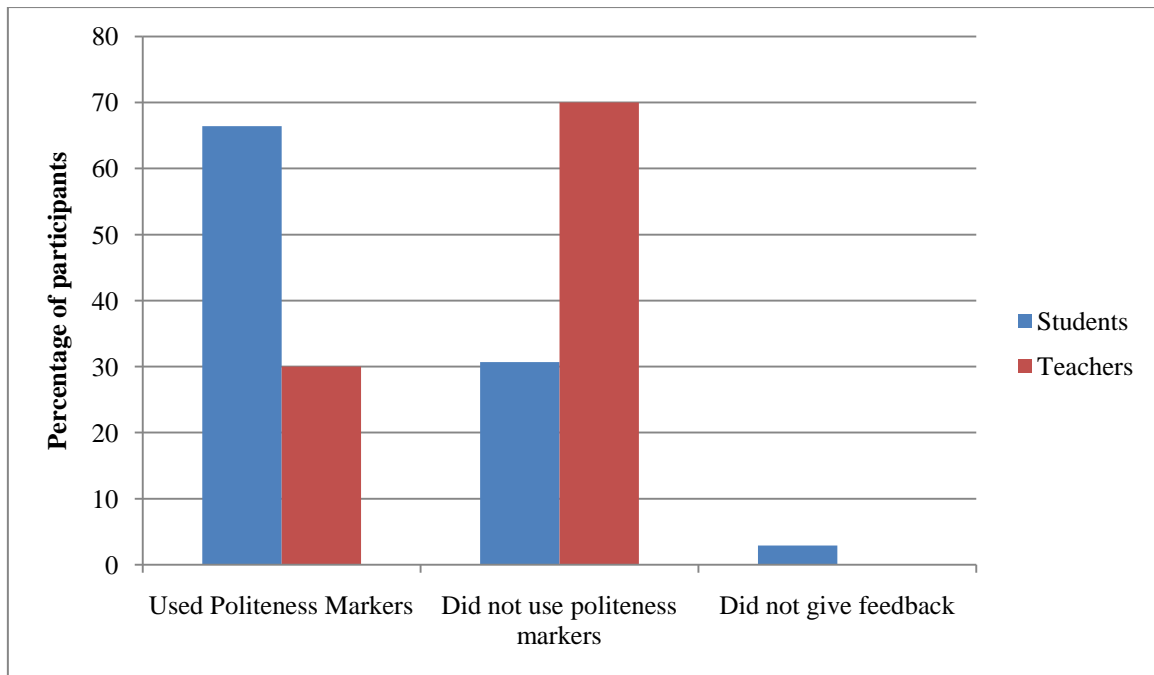


Figure 17: Comparison of use of politeness markers when giving corrections between teachers and students

Below are some of the common responses given with politeness markers;

Sorry but I am not Jean (please).

My name is not Jean please.(!)

Excuse me/pardon, I am sorry I am not Jean I am.... (please)

And the common responses given without politeness markers are;

No, that is not my name.

I am not Jean

My name is not Jean

2.3.5 Situation 7

In situation 7 the participants were required to address a misunderstanding and set records straight with the bursar. The responses given are represented in the graphs that follow.

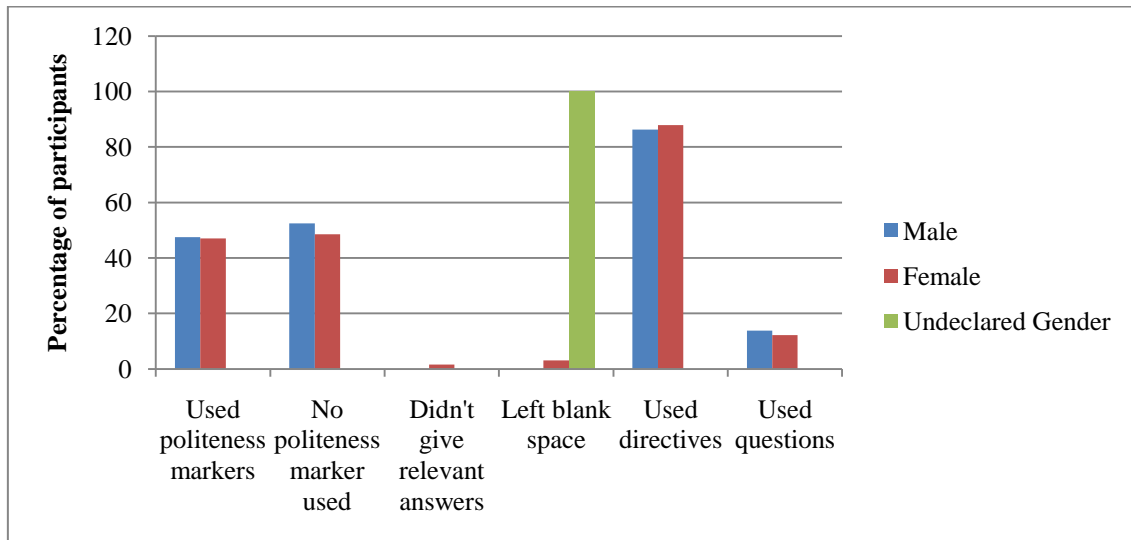


Figure 18: Comparison of different politeness markers and different sentence typologies when addressing a misunderstanding by gender

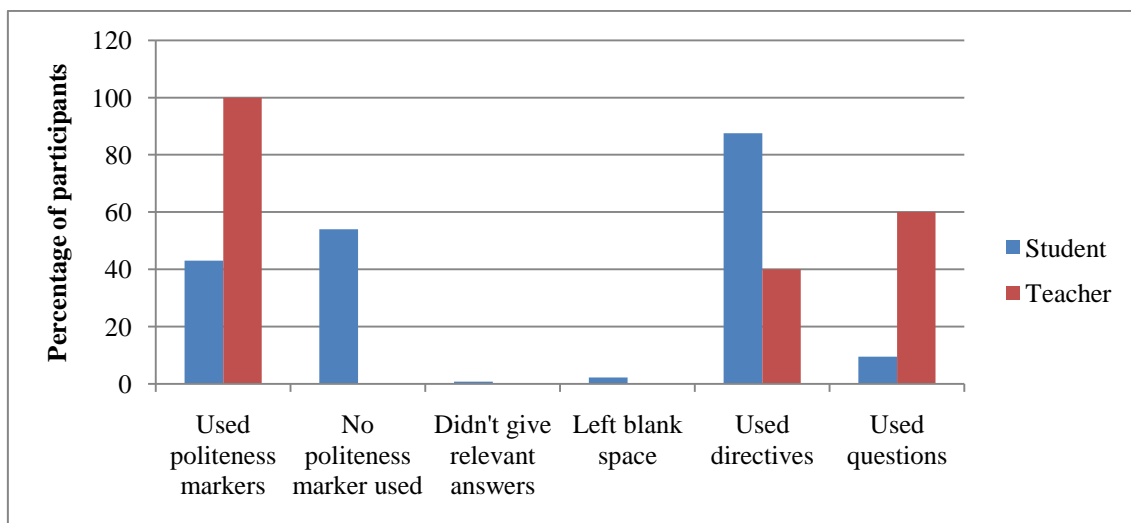


Figure 19: Comparison of different politeness markers and different sentence typologies when addressing a misunderstanding between teachers and students

As shown in figure 18 and 19 above, when addressing a misunderstanding, 46.94% used politeness markers in their responses i.e. *please, sorry, kindly, excuse me*. 50.34% did not use any politeness marker in their responses 0.68% didn't give relevant answers as they deviated from the question while 2.04% left blank spaces.

Of the 147 participants 84.35 % used directive, and 12.93% used a question, 0.68% didn't give relevant answers and 2.04% left blank spaces.

In this *situation 7*, all the teachers used politeness markers in contrast with the majority of students who did not. Whereas most students used directives in their responses more than half of the teachers used a question.

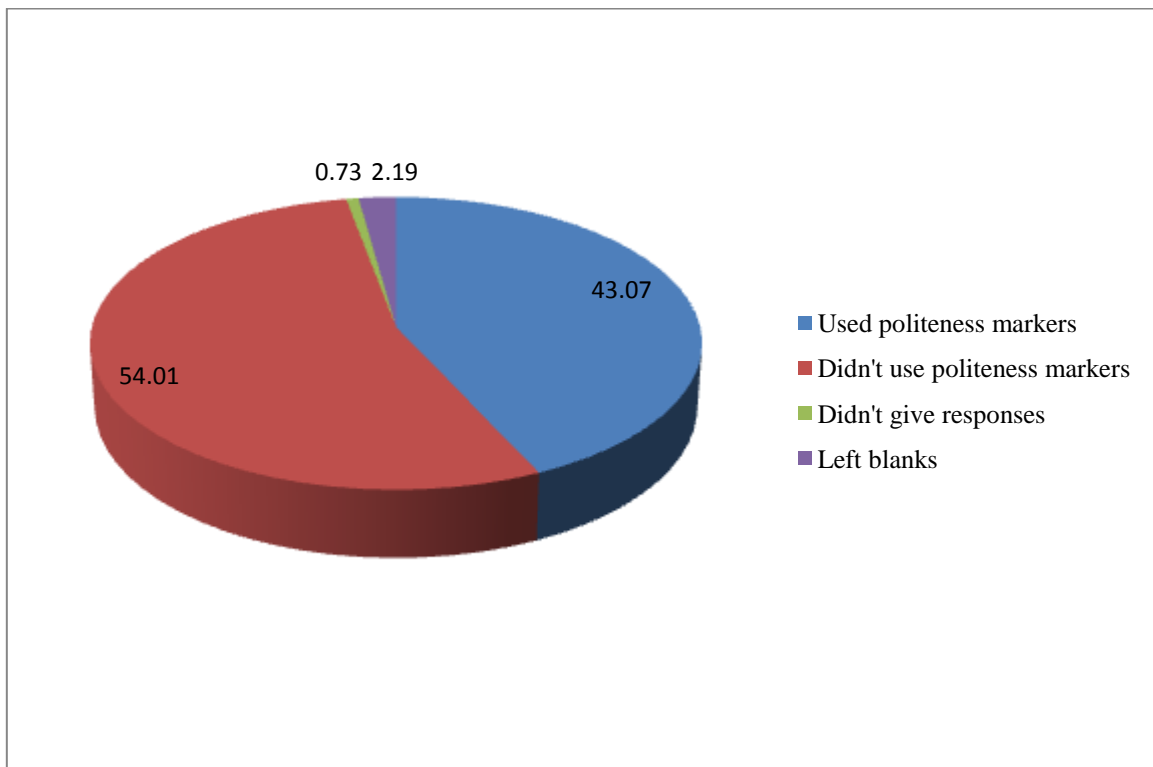


Figure 20: Students using politeness markers when correcting bursar

According to *figure 20* above, majority of students did not use any politeness marker in their address to the bursar unlike teachers (*see figure 21 below*). Examples of sentences and phrases used by students;

No I don't have any balance, I cleared

You are mistaken.....

I don't have any balance

Can you check (well)

You must have confused.....

Could you kindly confirm.

Could you please check/confirm?

Would you mind checking?

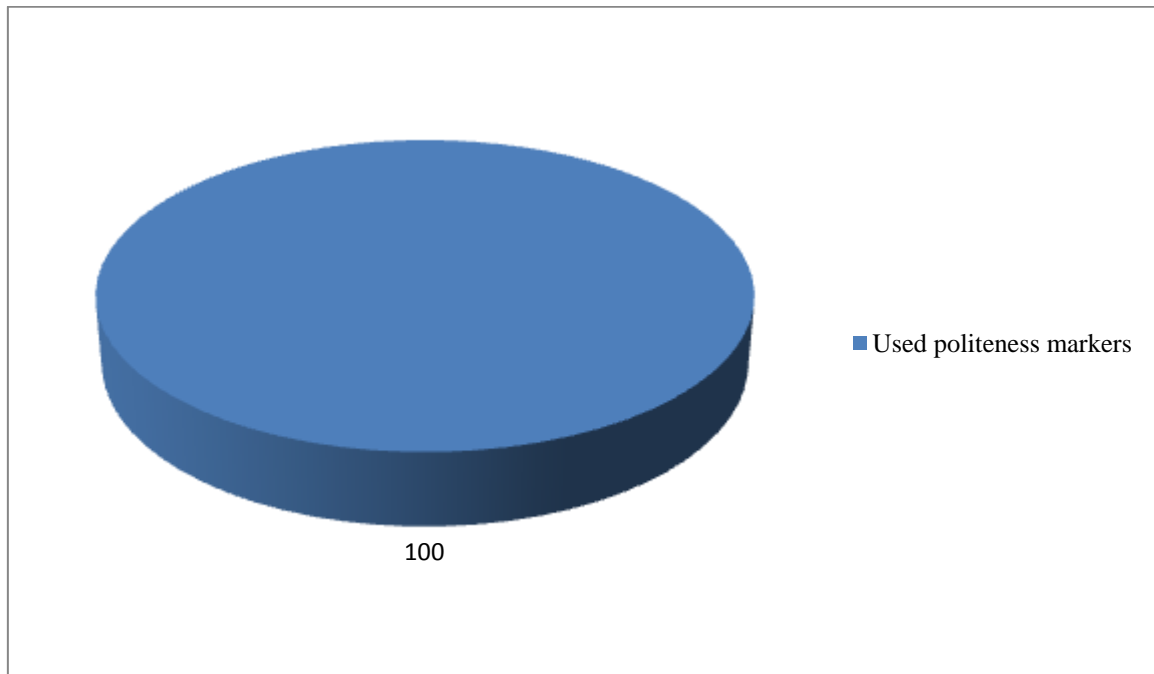


Figure 21: Teachers using politeness markers when correcting bursar for error in records

In contrast with the students all teachers found it courteous to address the bursar politely in situation 7 as shown in *figure 21*.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. DISCUSSION & INTERPRETATION

3.1.1. Categories of Politeness and Politeness Markers

The results and findings of the seven situations tabulated and graphically represented in chapter three were analysed and discussed in this chapter. The discussion was guided by the three theoretical models. First Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, then Leech's Politeness Principle and finally The Speech Act Theory. The three theoretical models, provide comprehensive ways of analysing the findings and coming to a concrete conclusion about the study participants.

The Politeness Theory lays the basic foundation of the basis of politeness and how utterances can be made to be more polite by including aspects that enhance politeness. There is the aspect of face and the impairment that can happen in the interlocutory process by committing FTAs. The Politeness Theory explains the process of salvaging face when it's lost or mitigating before it is lost through FSAs. The theory is however limited in handling some linguistic elements.

Leech's Politeness Principle complements The Politeness Theory since the two give a solid backup on the role of optionality and indirectness in enhancing politeness. The maxims of The Politeness Principle provide further scale of weighing an utterance as being polite or not. With The Politeness Principle, additional aspects such as; agreement-disagreement scale, authority scale and social distance which revolve around cost-benefit scale come into play to help in gauging politeness.

The Speech Act Theory works alongside the two theories as there are utterances that can only be handled by the Speech act theory like the idea of politeness in relation to primary and secondary speech acts. The Speech act gathers for all the linguistic acts that might not have been adequately handled by the other two theories. It also helps in explaining why a polite utterance in one circumstance would be picked over the less polite/ the impolite one or vice versa. Thus the three together give a powerful and exhaustive tool for analysis.

3.1.2. Rating Politeness Based on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Any utterance intruding on a person's independence is said to be a face threatening act and thus puts either the addressee or the addresser's face at risk (Holmes 201:5) based on Holmes statement there is no faceless utterance. In order to avoid FTAs a speaker has to assume

either positive or negative face. Positive face appreciates the need to be liked and acknowledged, it is a way of expressing oneness and an act of commiseration towards the target audience (*hearer*), it focuses on expressions that bring out the addressee's positive face. The speaker does not necessarily want to defend their face but that of the hearer. As such the audience become central to the interlocutors interaction. While negative face puts importance of a persons' right to act freely, the addressers avoids conflicts by using expressions such as; *sorry, please, thank you* and *excuse me*. The addresser uses conventional devices such as modality and indirect questions such as *could you possibly....., would you mind.....?* in order to give the hearer an option to do as per the speaker's request or to reject.

Brown and Levinson's theory on face highlights that in order to keep either positive or negative face, politeness or indirectness strategies are employed. When speaker commits no FTA then redress is not needed. (Durac and Durac, 2012:7) further illustrates on these strategies used to mitigate face threatening acts. Off record is an indirect strategy, the speaker does not impose and is the most polite. Strategies must be employed by the speaker to avoid conflict and clashes; in other words, being indirect is one of the strategies used to save face and sustain social relationships. While being indirect a speaker should strike a delicate balance between clarity and indirectness. As argued by Leech the balance is important because when an utterance is not easily perceivable or is ambiguous to the hearer then it comes with an added cost to the hearer and ends up being impolite. When a speaker commits an FTA and does not redress then he/she is said to be bald on record, the speaker thus imposes on the hearer as he/she is more direct and least polite.

In many instances the study population was more direct than they were indirect. Considering the following options in *situation 2*;

- a. *Will you answer the phone?*
- b. *Can you answer the phone?*
- c. *Would you mind answering the phone?*
- d. *Could you possibly answer the phone?*
- e. *Please answer the phone.*

On indirectness scale considering the options above, option *d* is more indirect compared to option *c*. Similarly, option *c* is more indirect than option *a*, which is more indirect than option *b* and *e*. On indirectness scale therefore, option *d* is considered to be the most polite and option *e* the least polite. The most preferred choice by the study participants is, *please answer the phone*, which is the most direct and least polite among the available options.

In *situation 6*, 33.33% were bald on record, while in *situation 7*, 50.34% which is more than half went bald on record. In the two situations the participants put no effort to lessen the threat to the hearers' face this is to mean that they were imposing. In *situation 3*, 20 of the 147 participants were direct, no down grader was used to minimise the FTA. No participant was captured in all the situations having given a hint e.g. it is too hot here (*situation 3*) or (in *situation 4*) I have assignment I need to do and I don't have a book. The use of speech patterns by females and males in this study was largely similar in many ways. In the open ended situations the usage of politeness markers was in range that had no much difference this applied in the sentence typologies as well. In the situations discussed above the study participants came out as being less polite. In order to be polite, as per The Politeness Theory one would need to be indirect and go on record, which was not the case in *situation 6, 7 and 3, 4* above.

According to (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61), negative face refers to our need to be independent without being imposed on what to do. This is typical of the responses in *situation 6 & 7* where the speakers claim the right to be independent. Negative face is commonly used when there is a social distance between the speaker and the hearer as in *situation 5 and 4*. While it is important to note that negative face does not necessarily mean bad, when used in this context, in her work, (Belza, 2008:59) emphasizes the need to interpret negative just as an opposite of positive. As such, the speaker achieves to emphasize the importance of the other's time and concern. In this, the speaker achieves to defend his/her negative face without affecting his/her relationship with the hearer.

The social distance gap is clearly depicted by the participants in the study. Some of teachers and students use conventional devices when given open ended questions. Majority of the students in particular, do not use any politeness marker especially when the subject involved does not directly benefit them. Students are notably polite when asking for a favour that is directly beneficial to them, for example in *Situation 7*, of the 137 participating students, 74 did not use any politeness marker when asked to respond as they would find it appropriate. These students did not mind losing face because they did not need any favour from the hearer. They probably felt entitled to their information being correctly recorded and as such most of them gave orders for the details to be correctly captured. This finding contradicts the work of Giles and Powesland, (1997) who document use of negative politeness in patronizing speech while maintaining politeness and use of negative politeness by those in authority respectively.

Negative face is the most assumed by the participants. The social distance between learners and teachers explains the dominant use of this face, though the face is also used between peers and friends. Based on Brown & Levinson, (1987), negative politeness should provide room for the hearer to do as the speaker says or to decline. On the contrary the participants in this study limited the space the hearer could exercise his/her freedom. It is apparent from the above examples based on Politeness Theory that the participants were less polite.

3.1.3. Rating Politeness Based on Leech's Scale of Politeness

As documented by (Watts 2003:58), Leech formulated six maxims of politeness principles. In his opinion, Leech avers that politeness is important in helping maintain friendly relations and enabling the interlocutors cooperate. This cooperation is what aids in accomplishing communication as documented by (Lunenburg, 2010:4); Nair & Joglekar, 2012:2) in understanding the politeness among interlocutors, one of the maxims used to gauge politeness is the tact maxim which works alongside scales of politeness such as cost-benefit scale, optionality scale, indirectness scale, authority scale, social distance and agreement-disagreement scale.

According to Leech, the optionality scale rates politeness based on the amount of choice the speaker allows the hearer. The hearer is given a wide range of possible responses/feedbacks which are formed by self judgement of the speaker's needs. While the speaker may have needs as per say, the hearer's needs are considered and he or she is given room not only to consider the speaker's needs but also hearer's needs. (Watts 2003:68) puts this flexibility to be able to say yes or no to a request in optionality scale. When an utterance gives you an option of saying yes or no then it is deemed as being polite. Similarly, the lesser the options the hearer has, the less polite the speaker is considered to be.

A modal auxiliary can be used either in giving option or imposing. Modals that point to ability and willingness are considered to be more polite. When these modals are used, the speaker gives the hearer option and is less imposing hence more polite e.g. *will you open the window?* In this case, the hearer can either open the window or explain to the speaker why the window is closed and cannot be opened, or why the window may be opened for a very short time and then closed again. When imposing modals are used, the speaker imposes on the hearer hence less polite e.g. *can you open the window.* In this instance the hearer has no option but to open the window according to the speaker. The imposing modals are less sensitive to the needs of the hearer, who in this instance of opening the window for example

could have closed the window because they are sick and feeling cold (Baktir, 2016:4; Yule, 1996:139). Imposing modals as well provides the hearer with fewer or no options to choose from, according to Leech's optionality, this is impolite. While imposing modals may be necessary in some instances and environments, for instance in the case of the window, *when a student faints and a window is closed, can you open the window! Would be the most appropriate choice to save the fainting student*, they should not to be encouraged in the regular communication as they reflect impoliteness. Based on optionality scale for example in *situation 1 and 2* the statements are made even more polite by the use of conditional, *would, could* as these modals give the hearer even more options. This is in line with what Leech calls *absolute politeness scale* (Leech 2000:6) in which an utterance which gives the hearer more choice is rated as more polite.

In situation 3 where one is required to request a friend to open a window 39.46% of the participants used no modal, e.g. *Please open the window*, 51.7% of the participants used imposing modal e.g. *can you open that window (please)*., 4.08% of the participants used modal pointing to willingness e.g. *will you open that window (please)?*, 4.76% of the participants, *used conditional* modals e.g. *would you/ could you open the window?*. It is evident from the figures above that, majority of the participants were imposing this means that they are less polite. Less than 10% of the participants gave room for options, with only 4.76% using conditional modals which according to Watts and Baktir are rated as most polite.

Considering the following options available in *situation 1*;

- a. *May I use your pen?*
- b. *I want to use your pen.*
- c. *Will you lend me your pen?*
- d. *Can I use your pen?*
- e. *Would you mind if I used your pen?*

In the sentences above, option *e* gives the hearer more options than option *a*. On leech's optionality scale, if the above are rated from most polite to least polite, this would be in the order of *e, a, c, d, b*. This means that a participant using option *e* is considered to be more polite than a participant using option *a*. Whereas a participant using option *d* is less polite, there is nothing polite at all with the participant using option *b*. Option *b* only gives courtesy that the speaker informed the hearer of his/her intention to use their pen. In option *e* the hearer has numerous options at hand; he or she may accept or reject the request from the

speaker and give reason for his or her decision or just reject or accept without giving an explanation. The hearer may as well ask for room to ponder about accepting or rejecting the speaker's request.

The same would be true if the above sentences were arranged on optionality scale;

- a. *Will you answer the phone?*
- b. *Can you answer the phone?*
- c. *Would you mind answering the phone?*
- d. *Could you possibly answer the phone?*
- e. *Please answer the phone*

Ranking from most polite to least polite therefore, this would be arranged as *d, c, a, b, e*. The speaker using *d* would therefore be termed as most polite as the hearer has a greater freedom to comply with the request or not, and thus the threat to his or her face is reduced.

In situation one only 9.25% of the participants chose; *would you mind if I used your pen*, a similar scenario is evident in situation two, where the two most polite choices; *would you mind answering the phone* & *could you possibly answer the phone*, are the least preferred by the participants. Most participants preferred *please answer the phone*, this choice has less options to the hearer according to Leech's scale of optionality the choice is the least polite.

Other scales fronted by Leech to rate politeness is the social distance scale and the authority scale. Leech argues that a person in authority can impose on their juniors while the juniors lack that power. Authority scale comes in play in formal situations e.g. *situation 5* the speaker here tends to be indirect by using modals. In *situation 5* the highest number of students to use lexical politeness markers is recorded. A total of 94.89% of the students used down graders such as please, excuse me, kindly to soften their utterances as they were seeking for permission from the deputy principal. A similar trend is observed in situation 4 where 89.78 % of the students used politeness markers while borrowing a book from the library. *Situation 5* records higher percentage since the deputy principal has more power compared to the librarian. The students are aware of the authority ranking in school since when requesting their peers to open a window in *situation 3* the percentage of those who use politeness markers is at 86.13% which is a lower record that in *situation 4 & 5*. In situation 5 the participants used reasons to accompany their request this is due to social distance between students and deputy principal.

The trend in situation above points out to the fact that participants are likely to be polite when seeking a favour. It also shows that the majority of the participants are more polite when addressing their seniors and they do this in consideration of the rank the addressee holds in relation to the speaker. The deputy principal who is higher in rank is addressed most politely by the participants followed by the librarian and lastly the peers are addressed least politely. This could be highlighting the reason behind the high cases of conflict between peers as opposed to people of different ranks. Being less polite could easily lead to fallout /disharmony in conversation or an escalated conflict.

In all the situations the students generally employed politeness markers and when they picked an impolite act, it can be argued that the students did not know what politeness entails. The same cannot be said about teachers, they are aware of the norms and principles of politeness. The teachers can be said to have deliberately committed FTAs because situations allowed them, this is evident especially in *situation 7* where a 100% of them employed either internal or external syntactic down graders or both. More than half of the teachers (60%) in this situation employed an indirect act in order to avoid using an order. In short in situation 7 they maximized on positive politeness unlike other situations where they did not. The record high number of use of politeness markers can be attributed to the fact that the teachers would benefit most if the misunderstanding was ironed out with the bursar. Participants are likely to be polite when they are benefitting or seeking a favour.

As (Watts, 2003:68) explains, Leech's cost benefit scale demands that a speaker minimises the cost to others and maximise the benefit to others, the cost –benefit scale also involves other related scales as the agreement-disagreement scale. Watts, further explains that for an utterance to be termed as polite the speaker has to minimise disagreement between himself/herself and the hearer and maximise agreement between himself/herself and the hearer. The student participants particularly in situation 7 disregarded this notion. Their responses caused further disharmony. E.g. in situation 7 the following are some of the responses given by the participants;

No, I don't have any balance...

You are mistaken...

You must have confused...

Can you check.

The responses given could only aggravate the conflict. In *situation 6* the respondents further violated the politeness rule of agreement since they were outright quick to distance themselves from the mistaken identity and were hostile to the hearer. In their responses they did not downplay the mistaken identity. Below are some of the responses given;

I am not Jean

No, that is not my name.

My name is not Jean

My name is not Jean please (!)

A notable number of participants used ‘excuse’ and ‘please’ not necessarily as a politeness marker but to show some extent of disappointment. The lexical politeness markers used in some of the responses in this instance were not working primarily as down graders but it was a sign of irritation and anger by the fact that the speaker was mistaken for someone else. This shows that politeness is not only a matter of putting a ‘*please*’ here and an ‘*excuse me*’ there. As (Holmes, 2013:13) puts it, ‘*please*’ does not always make a statement more polite and that politeness is a great deal more than the superficial politeness routines.

The speaker did not seek to make the interlocutory circumstance amicable. Falling out could be avoided if the participants would have opted for responses such as;

I must really resemble Jean....

I can’t blame you.....

Most people confuse me with Jean.....

The participants as shown in the situations above are characteristically less polite. This is reflected by the kind of choices they picked from the provided options and the responses they gave. This creates a ripe scenario for possibility of chaos. When the hearer has options, he or she will feel his or her thoughts and feelings are appreciated and his or her contribution necessary in the particular setting. It is through such simple acts of politeness that we enhance communication and enable easy conveyance of information while limiting our ability to hurt

those around us and those participating in the conversation. With this we accomplish the essence of communication.

3.1.4 Rating Politeness Based on Illocutionary Acts

In order to be polite one needs to know how to use various speech functions in the right manner, using inappropriate linguistic acts makes one to be viewed as being inconsiderate and impolite. Some acts are inherently polite thus using such acts makes one naturally polite. Considering an instance where you need to make someone do something, you could do so by welcoming, proposing or offering as opposed to commanding, ordering and directing.

Commands and requests which are usually used in informal situations fall under direct politeness and are considered to be less polite. Commands can also be used in specific instances where they are considered to be the formal means of communication. Such environments include but not limited to; military barracks, emergency situations, police command centers among others. The study participants in all the situations employed the directives more than the interrogatives with the latter being more polite. This translates to the fact that they are less polite. This behaviour gives us another trait of the study participants, reactionary. They are fast to react to their subjects than they are to find more information about any particular incident. For example, in *situation 3*, more participants felt a high sense of entitlement to having the window opened than those seated next to the window. As such, the participants did not care to confirm first why those seated next to the window had it closed. The directive was used by 70.07% of the participants in making the request, 29.93 % used an interrogative the latter allows the hearer a room to carry out the request or to decline, the speaker does not impose on hearer. The speakers who opted for the interrogative are more polite than those who chose the directive.

In situation two the most popular pick by the participants is; *please answer the phone*, 59.86 % of the participants opted for this option which is a directive and is not as polite as an interrogative. This pattern re occurs in *situation 4, 5, 6 & 7*. The participants in their responses used directives to make a request, ask for permission or in clarifying a matter, e.g. in *situation 7* the following were some of the responses; with over 80% using the directive;

I don't have any balance (assertive)

Can you check (well) (directive)

Could you kindly confirm? (directive)

Could you please check/confirm? /. (question /directive).

(Baktir, 2016:6) introduces us to illocutionary point concept. Considering two different speech acts: an 'order' and a 'request', which are both directives, having the same point, are distinguished by a difference in illocutionary force. The weaker the illocutionary force the more polite an utterance is. A request has a weaker illocutionary force compared to an order, thus a request is more polite than a command. A command presents more cost to the hearer since a command provides less options or no option to the hearer. The speaker expects the hearer to do according to speaker's needs without putting into consideration the needs and options the hearer may have. On politeness scale, this is considered least polite (Ogiermann 2009:191, 203). The participants employed politeness markers alongside the directive. This was particularly important in lessening the illocutionary force of the directive which was majorly used across the different situations. It is notable that in *situation 5*, 93.9% of the participants used lexical units marking politeness.

Directives are limited by the need to be polite, in deliberate attempt to be polite one should employ the interrogative more as opposed to commands and orders. An interrogative, which is considered to be more polite than the command, was used by a smaller number of the participants. The interrogatives was used in this case to request a friend to open a window as in *situation three*, to borrow a book in *situation 5* to get permission in *situation 4* and to set records straight in *situation 7*. Thus the interrogative here was doing the act of request and not its primary function of just enquiring/asking thus it is an indirect speech act. Indirect speech acts are considered to be more polite compared to the direct speech acts(Ogiermann 2009:91). An interrogative is also a syntactic down grader whose function is to modify internally the request by softening its illocutionary force as it decreases the face-threat to the speaker if a request is refused. The study population used the directive more than the interrogative hence they are less polite.

Other than different speech acts, lexical items that have either weak or strong illocutionary force were also used by the interlocutors. Different lexical items carry different illocutionary force, the choice of a lexical item is important in matters politeness. Choice of word in *situation 4*, where one is to borrow a book from the library for example, use, assist, borrow, give, request and want vary in terms of the illocutionary force, the lesser the illocutionary strength the more polite a word is e.g. *give me that book!* is impolite compare to *assist me with that book*. *Assist me with that book* has lesser illocutionary force hence more polite.

Choice of word is important aspect in oral as well as written communication. In oral communication at times the body language or the tone used may aid in lessening the illocutionary force even when the choice of word has more illocutionary force unlike in written where the speaker is not physically present to be judged based on facial expression, intonation and general body language. Some lexical items primarily serve as politeness tool, since semantically it is empty, words such as *please, kindly, pardon, thank you, excuse me*, are used for down grading/softening an utterance or for alerting. For example, in the statement *give me that book!*, by using the lexical term *please* before or after the statement makes it sound more polite compared to when it is said without. *Please give me that book.* Though not very polite if rated on either of the Leech's scales of politeness, is more polite than when it is said without the lexical *please*. In *situation 4* majority of the participants chose a lexical unit that has a weak illocutionary force such as; borrow, assist, help and lend. Few participants used lexical units with strong illocutionary force such as give and want. Different situations call for different strategies i.e. asking for permissions, favours or just giving information. The linguistic facilitators carry different semantic content and function while explaining interlocutors relationship, this can be attributed to the *illocutionary point* concept (Baktir, 2016:5). This is the attempt to make the addressee do something (when ordering), or in the case of a negative order, to make somebody stop doing something. The illocutionary point of a descriptive speech act would be that of representing reality. For example, if there was a fire breakout in a building, it would be illogical to start moving from room to room telling occupants one by one "*please run*". In such a scenario, the reality would require that there is an emergency and an order requiring all people to run would be most appropriate compared to a request requiring the occupants to run. Though an order would be considered impolite on either scale of order of rating politeness, as well as based on concept of illocutionary point, it is the most needed reality in this instance. Though the circumstances are different in situation one to seven there was no scenario that would justify the use of an order yet still some of the participants opted for an order. The study participants preferred the directive over other sentence typologies this characteristically maps them as being less polite.

The speech act theory and the two politeness theory models give a concrete affirmation of the characteristically less polite nature of the participants. The participants were found to be imposing as they gave limited options to agree or disagree with. They were also inconsiderate of the other person's thoughts and feelings. The malignant nature of such utterances could

only be suppressed by the use of politeness marker up to some extent. Clearly politeness is not an appendix in matters politeness.

3.2. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Based on the parameters used to measure politeness in this study such as; optionality scale, indirectness scale, modals, politeness makers, agreement –disagreement scale, authority scale and cost benefit scale the participants were found to be impolite. When we are impolite we disrupt the process of communication. How we say something is at most times more important than what is said.

The participants in all the situations were imposing for example in situation 3, 4, 5 and 7 they preferred a directive over a question when making a request. The directive bears more cost to the listener / hearer more than the question does as it offers fewer options and is most direct; the question on the other hand is an indirect act which acts as a syntactic down grader to the force a directive would cause to the other party. This coupled with 13% in situation 3, 10% in situation 4 , 33% in situation 6 and 50% in situation 7 who went bald on record can only lead to a fall out in a communication.

For smooth communication, Leech encourages speech users to always pick polite acts over impolite ones. In the study the participants majored on impolite acts, for instance, in situation 1&2 participants who chose the most polite act were less than 10% in and those who majored on impolite act at 60% in situation 2. Whenever modals were used the students employed the conditionals the least which according to Yule are the most polite and instead preferred the imposing modals. This is the case in situation 3, 4 and 5.

The interlocutory process can thus be said to be jerky, the warmth and the comfort that comes along with a smooth conversation is not achieved. When this happens, it leads to animosity between teachers and students or between students and students. When teachers use face threatening acts it makes the students uncomfortable and uneasy. (Karimnia & Zade 2007:82) states “students will feel more comfortable and appreciated in the class if instructors produce utterances which are polite and enhance their self-esteem.”

When conversation is impaired, it means that the school goals cannot be easily achieved, coordination of stakeholders in the school becomes strenuous. Communication is greatly flawed and the process becomes unfruitful and all these stems from challenges experienced in interlocutory process.

In situation 7, the students were faced with a situation of addressing a misunderstanding, in their responses some used ungrammatical structures, this coupled with 74 who used no politeness markers can only climax ineffective communication in an interlocutory process. The inability to communicate is a clear challenge in day to day relationship between students and their superiors which several scholars including, (Kindiki, 2009:257-258); (Lunenburg, 2010:5); (Nair & Joglekar, 2012:2), document to be important in school management and performance of students. While performance is an area that requires multidisciplinary approach, the essential medium for this multidisciplinary approach is English language so the ability to communicate coherently is important.

In *situation 5, 6 and 7*, few respondents (students), left blank spaces without responding. Common to *situation 5, 6 and 7* is the fact that the learners were addressing their superiors, either seeking permission or clarifying a communiqué. It can be attributed to the fear of being reprimanded or the social gap contributed to this situation. Fear for being reprimanded could have been judged by the speaker based on past relationship with the hearer or the fear of making first contact with the hearer. Communication is an active task and purposefully shared experience involving two or more people (Kayode, 2012:106). As an active task, it has to involve constant activity of all the interlocutors without restricting either of the participants and both parties should be cooperative. Once the dialogue becomes one sided, this is no longer a dialogue but a monologue and as such, the process of communication stands greatly impaired. Communication can be broken in such instance too. The breaking can be because of several reasons which include but not limited to; language barrier, inability to control emotions and poor choice of words by either of the interlocutors. Where there is a language barrier, it may be because of one of these two; either the speaker is incoherent or using a language less understood or not understandable by the hearer.

In *situation 6* as well there is a fraction that though responded they are not clear in their responses and some did not even answer the question. Lack of clarity in communication is also evident in *situation 1*, where some students did not follow instructions of answering the close ended questions and instead answered in a manner they felt was fit for them. This is an indication that either they did not understand the question or they apparently decided to disregard the instructions of how to respond. While communication is essential, in his work, (Kayode, 2012:106) avers that communication in an organization is successful when the speaker and the hearer have same comprehension of the message. The fact that the students provided irrelevant answer deviating from the question, as in *situation 6 & 7* can be

interpreted to mean; the students did not comprehend the question, or they understood but could not construct grammatical sentences to respond as appropriate. In some scenarios in these study, the students not only constructed grammatically wrong answers, but also incoherent with perpetual inconsistency and deviance from the question.

Inability to comprehend the basic use of a language is barrier on its own as the end result is a poorly informed group that cannot converse smoothly and may experience hiccups in their day to day relationships. Given that some students could not understand written literature, it tells us that the process of teaching in this area is not only challenging but its goals are not met. The students end up with poor content absorption since the language of delivery is poorly comprehended. This is the case especially where the students are required to read the content and use same for their knowledge. This category of students as well may perform dismally in exams not because they do not know the correct answers in exam but because they do not comprehend what is expected of them in the exam room. Though the students did not understand the content they were reading directly from the books, they could have understood the content that was orally taught because the teacher found all means possible to explain it. But during the exam, they are required to read, understand and respond to written questions. This may become a challenge to translate the content they have to written work.

This study therefore agrees with another study conducted by (Kindiki 2009:258), who concludes that oral communication or dialogues should be used in schools to a large extend as compared to other forms of communication. In oral communication, the speaker can easily clarify and take time to simplify a communication to a language and form that the hearer understands best. According to Kindiki, it would be beneficial to sensitize students on barriers of interpersonal communication which can hinder effective communication. In the same study too, the teachers and generally school were encouraged to have effective prefect system. This can be due to the reason that students were able to simplify their language to a level they understand well as opposed to when similar communication is to come from the teacher(s). Like in the study carried out by Kindiki, ineffective communication results in conflict, chaos, misunderstanding and lack of confidence.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1. Conclusions

Linguistic politeness manifests through various forms of language structure. Uses of such structures enhance accepted standards of social etiquette, avoiding conflict and making sure that the social interaction runs smoothly. By enhancing social interaction, they are part and parcel of smooth communication and aid in timely exchange of information and execution of activities in a school set up.

The participants were found to be imposing as they gave limited options to agree or disagree with, they were also inconsiderate of the other person's thoughts and feelings and this causes hurt and leads to premature conversation. The utterances they preferred were of more cost than benefit to the hearer. The participants can summarily be said to be less polite, this creates a ripe scenario for chaos. Being less polite puts off the charm of a conversation, it chokes the excitement out of what would be a rich and productive conversation. Using impolite language is like taking off the cement that glues the wall together, sooner or later it will crumble in, simply put impoliteness withers and kills communication prematurely. For effective communication one should master the art of politeness which is the pillar of any smooth conversation. Failure to use acceptable structures as is the case with the majority of the participants, leads to disputes and conflicts which affects communication quality and goal.

In order to lessen the impact of FTAs the participants employed internal mitigations such as, lexical, phrasal and syntactic (interrogatives and conditionals) illocutionary softeners on different occasions to soften an utterance. *Please, kindly* and *excuse me* are the most used politeness markers by students with *please* being the most frequently used. These politeness markers are used as down graders. External modification like supportive reasons and attention getters such as; *my friend, hey, hello* and *how are you* were also used, especially when addressing colleagues or juniors to aid in creating rapport for a friendly environment for communication.

The most used sentence typology is the directive. The participants used politeness markers alongside the directive to soften its illocutionary force.

Lexical Politeness markers and indirect acts (interrogative) were most likely to be used by learners and teachers in these two instances;

- When addressing their superiors or seniors.
- When borrowing an item/seeking favour from superiors

Most students and teachers are less polite and too casual, when;

- Dealing with colleagues/friends/accomplices
- Addressing a misunderstanding or correcting a person.

In highly formal situation e.g. requesting the deputy principal permission to go home, face is at greater risk than in less formal situation so indirectness and very polite request are preferred. This enables the speaker give the hearer room to make choice from available options and while responding to the speaker, he or she does not only respond as per the speaker's needs but according to how he or she (the hearer) is comfortable with offering what the speaker wants.

Because hearer needs to save face too, he or she will try as much as possible to respond in a way that caters for the needs of the speaker though this is done by choice and not with compulsion or coercion.

Interaction between students and administrators is characterized by respect, emotionality and indirectness (typical of negative politeness strategy). This can be attributed to the social distance between interlocutors in the course of communication.

Some of the participants could not express themselves in coherent written English language in their responses. There's a challenge of coherent communication in written English in Bahati sub-county, Nakuru County. This study does not however measure to what extent the participants were unable to express themselves. The conclusion is drawn from participants who could neither answer multiple choice questions nor open ended questions, and those who were able to answer multiple choices but could not respond to open ended questions. This is a pointer to poor comprehension. For communication goal to be achieved there must be clear and logical use of language. This study also does not put into consideration the impact of paralinguistic features, pitch or intonation on politeness.

This study concludes that the participants are less polite in their interlocutory circumstances. Their main illocutionary act is the directive which is the most imposing hence least polite.

They employ lexical politeness markers only to reduce the illocutionary force. This leads to conflict and friction thus affecting the quality of communication. Goals are not met. One of the reasons the students are found to be less polite is because they are yet to learn what is polite and what is not polite. The same cannot be said about the teachers as they seem aware of politeness norms but due to authority they have over learners they tend to be imposing. When teachers are polite the learners feel comfortable and appreciated. They relax and enjoy conversation and benefit the most out of it. The opposite is also true when teachers are less polite they are perceived as being hostile and the communication process is not smooth as it was the case in this study. The students thus limit contact with the teacher which in turn greatly affects the overall goal of the school

4.1.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the subsequent conclusions, this study recommends that;

Importance of politeness should be incorporated in the curriculum at early stages of education so as to incorporate the culture of politeness in the learners. This will lessen conflict and subsequently ensure communication goals are achieved.

To enhance student-teacher relationship and establish a student friendly environment, it is important that the teachers address students not necessarily in a manner that imposes authority but cordial enough to pass a message.

Regular workshops for teachers will aid in regularly updating their communication skills so that students can borrow a leaf from them.

There is need to conduct a comprehensive study to look into the impact that breakdown in communication due to poor comprehension of English language has on the academic performance and the day to day running of school activities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Map Showing Location of Nakuru County



(Adapted from County Government of Nakuru Annual Development Plan 2018-2019)

Appendix 2: Work Plan

ACTIVITY	APRIL- MAY 2019	JUNE 2019	JUNE- DECEMBER 2019	JAN 2020- SEPT 2021
Development of Proposal				
Proposal submission				
Sample Collection and Analysis				
Project Write up and Submission				

Appendix 3: Consent for Study & Questionnaire.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES BETWEEN TEACHERS AND LEARNERS BASED ON LINGUISTIC RESOLUTION FEATURES IN BAHATI SUB COUNTY, NAKURU COUNTY.

My name is Carolyn Cheptoo. I am a Masters student at University of Nairobi and a teacher by profession. I am conducting a study on “**Communication Challenges between Teachers and Learners based on Linguistic Resolution Features in Bahati, Nakuru County**”. The information obtained from this study will be useful in understanding the challenges that exist in the course of learner-teacher communication. There is need to be polite during a conversation, being polite calls for one to be courteous at all times and in all situations. Politeness improves ones relationship with others; it helps to build respect, rapport, boost your self-esteem and confidence. Most importantly politeness enhances effective communication.

In the study I look at the role politeness plays in ensuring effective communication. A learner/a teacher who is polite in his or her language use, is often understood whereas one who lacks politeness will experience communication challenges.

Procedures to be followed

Participation in this study will require that you fill a copy of the questionnaire form attached herein. From the form I will extract the demographic data, which are; gender, age and career. Participation in this study is voluntary. You are therefore free to ask any questions pertaining to this study.

Risks

This study will not seek any extra information from you, apart from that which you will provide in the study questionnaire.

Confidentiality

This study will not use your name or any information that can lead to your personal identification anywhere. Your information will be coded and at no point will the personal information be made public.

Withdrawal privilege

If you decide to withdraw from the study, you can do so without penalty or prejudice at any time. Your withdrawal will not have any consequences on the relationship you currently have with the school.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to seek any clarifications about this study, you can contact me through +254728657171 or Dr. G.N. Marete +254726681399 or Dr. Alice Wachira +254729499580 or University of Nairobi P.O Box 30197, GPO, Nairobi.

Questionnaire

Age: **Gender:** **Career:**

1. You are feeling hot and your friend is standing next to the window. Write down how you would ask him/her to open the window.

.....
.....
.....

2. Which of the following would you use if you were borrowing a pen from your classmate/colleague?

- a. May I use your pen?*
- b. I want to use your pen.*
- c. Will you lend me your pen?*
- d. Can I use your pen?*
- e. Would you mind if I used your pen?*

3. Arrange the following in the order you would prefer to use (from the most preferred to the least preferred) when requesting a person to answer a phone call.

- a. Will you answer the phone?*
- b. Can you answer the phone?*
- c. Would you mind answering the phone?*
- d. Could you possibly answer the phone?*
- e. Please answer the phone.*

4. You have an assignment that you need to complete and have to use a book from the library. Write down how you would request for the book from the librarian.

.....
.....
.....
...

5. Imagine you have forgotten your locker keys at home and require them urgently, write down how you will express yourself to the deputy principal to allow you to go home.

.....
.....

6. You are new in the school, someone confuses you with Jean and addresses you as Jean. How would you respond?

.....
.....
7. The bursar mistakenly thinks you owe the school some money, he/she calls you to inform you about it. Complete the conversation that is likely to have taken place.

Bursar: You owe the school some money which was supposed to have been cleared last month.

You:

.....
.....

Bursar: (checking) That is right, there must have been a mix up, I can see you cleared it.

Participant’s Statement.

I confirm that the above information regarding this study is clear to me. I am satisfied by the answers I have been given with regards to all the concerns that I raised. I have voluntarily accepted to take part in this study with expectation of no material or monetary benefit during or at the end of the study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study anytime with no consequences for withdrawal.

Code ID for the Participant:

Signature/Thumbprint: **Date:**

Investigator’s Statement

I, the undersigned, have explained to the study participant the above statement and answered all his/her question in a language she or he understands best. I have explained the procedures to be followed in the study, the risks and the benefits involved.

Name of the Investigator: **Phone no:**

Investigator’s Signature: **Date:**