Pragmatic Modifiers in Teachers' Polite Requests in EFL Classroom Interaction in Manggarai, Indonesia

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Abstract: *This research mainly explores pragmatic modifiers in shaping teachers' polite requests in English Foreign Language classroom interaction (henceforth: EFL). The research was designed qualitatively, employing non-participant observation and field-note methods. Audio-video recording and note-taking were used to obtain the data on the male and female teachers' utterances during classroom interaction. The key apparatuses are a smartphone Vivo of Y21 and a digital voice recorder of 32 GB to capture natural-occurring data. The data were analysed through three interactive procedures of qualitative data analysis; data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. The data interpretation was primarily drawn on the pragmatic theory of politeness, FTAs, and pragmatic modifiers. Part of the data was analysed from language and gender perspectives. The findings yielded that the male and female teachers applied internal and external pragmatic modifiers to enact polite requests in classroom interaction settings. The internal pragmatic modifiers cover downtoner, politeness marker, appreciative opening, and hedged performative opening. The external pragmatic modifiers include vocative, disarmer, and propitiator. There is a slight difference between male and female teachers in realising those types of pragmatic modifiers. It was partly related to the features of women's language. However, such empirical evidence could not be directly generated for language and gender. The findings have implications for further investigations to probe the issue in depth.*

Keywords: Politeness, pragmatic modifier, request, EFL classroom, classroom Interaction

1. Introduction

Politeness is an aspect of language use crucially required to perform a communicative act. It enacts communication running well and effectively, particularly in negotiating meaning and addressing intention between a speaker and a hearer. It must be noticed when participants intend to communicate effectively and efficiently. Applying politeness needs a mutual understanding of self-respect toward others and the epistemic context of communication. Therefore, Yule (1996) contended that politeness is thought of as a means of revealing an awareness of another person's self-image. In this sense, politeness is likely to be realised in various strategies and markers depending on how the parties, in interaction, manifest the notion of public-self image as termed "face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

Interaction is pedagogically designed and integrated into language instruction, including English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, to facilitate teaching-learning activities. Mainly, classroom interaction strengthens language instruction, communicative competence and skill, and task orientation Markee, 2015). It is a means that teachers and students use to achieve communicative goals during the teaching-learning process. For teachers, interaction is beneficial for explaining

materials, managing class, guiding, directing students, giving feedback and comment, responding, encouraging, and evaluating. Meanwhile, interaction is also useful for students in expressing thoughts and feelings, sharing ideas, negotiating knowledge, and completing tasks. Evidently, previous studies have shown that interaction determines the accomplishment of instructional activities and the attainment of learning objectives (Rachmawati et al., 2022). It shows that effective classroom interaction is vital for the success of EFL teaching-learning activities.

The language used by teachers in classroom interaction mainly serves multiple instructional purposes. For this reason, teachers' utterances should be accurate and appropriate for conveying clear meaning, message, and intention. In this case, polite utterances are highly considered to create efficient and effective interaction between teacher and student in EFL classrooms (Nurmawati et al., 2019). Numerous studies have been conducted to uncover the politeness phenomenon that occurs in teacher-student interaction during EFL instruction. Several pieces of research related to this analysis have revealed prominent findings. Alakrash & Bustan (2020) examined politeness strategies in making requests; Arif et al. (2018) investigated gender differences in employing politeness strategies in classroom interaction. Interestingly, the research showed the relation between gender and the application of politeness strategies. Further, Darong et al. (2020) specifically explored pragmatic modifiers in teachers' requests. Soviana Mukminatien (2020) studied politeness strategies and illocutionary acts. Meanwhile, Wijayanti et al. (2020) elaborated politeness realisation by native English teachers. Different from the other studies, Yrisarry et al. (2019) attempted to utilise politeness strategies to the students' uncivil behaviour.

The realisation of pragmamodifiers is partly attributable to the gender difference of the interactants. Male and female speakers apply various markers to show politeness in classroom interaction. The distinction reflects divergent language features between male and female participants. In classroom interaction, male and female teachers are the key participants who communicate with students in English as a language of instruction. More particularly, both use different polite utterances and markers in interaction for instructional activities. However, as far as a few studies were concerned with pragmatic modifiers in EFL classroom interaction, the exploration of gender distinction between male and female teachers is still insufficient. It is, therefore, the gap that this study attempted to fill. The current study seeks to shed light on the use of pragmatic modifiers by male and female teachers. Aside from that, it contributes to the recent investigation of politeness in language and gender perspective.

1.1   Research questions

To pursue in depth the phenomenon of pragmatic modifiers in the teachers' requests, the study probes two research questions formulated as follows:

- RQ: (1) What are pragmatic modifiers found in the teachers' requests?
- RQ: (2) How are pragmatic modifiers applied in performing polite requests?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Request, politeness, and face-threatening acts

Basically, a request is different from an order or a command. It is an act of asking another person to do an activity. There is no speaker's imposition on the hearer to perform an act. Leech (2014, p. 135) defines a request as "a speech event that gives H a choice as to whether to perform the desired act or not". In this respect, a speaker proposes his desire, while a hearer opts for it to perform or not to comply. As Kallia stated that a request is a kind of directive speech act emphasising speaker's desire for the hearer to act (Lakoff & Ide, 2005). In an instructional context, making a request is a part of classroom interaction in which teachers ask students to perform various learning tasks, projects in whilst-activity or assignments in post-activity. Mainly, teachers use a request to assist students to achieve learning goals. Therefore, it is likely that teachers' polite requests are the form of language

classrooms that employ specific linguistic devices (e.g. markers) to realise their communicative acts (Walsh, 2006).

Politeness is concerned with how language is used accurately and appropriately in communication. It can be observed through the interactants' utterances. Several theories have been widely recognised and applied to investigate politeness phenomenon in diverse interaction contexts, including in EFL instructional settings. Those are related to the prominent theories proposed by (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Lakoff & Ide, 2005; Leech, 2014; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983). The existing theories establish the significant theoretical framework of politeness concerning notions, types of strategy, FTAs, maxims, scale, and parameters. In this respect, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory has contributed to the fundamental body of knowledge to the current research in exploring multiple fascinating issues of politeness in social interaction (Locher & Watts, 2005). Brown & Levinson (1987) define politeness as the speaker's attempt to save and keep the face of the hearer.

Politeness theory is developed from the face concept. The core assumption is that a speaker uses language in favour of hearer's self-esteem. The notion of the face has a metaphorical sense referring to "the public self-image of the interacting person" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). It is more emotionally driven than physical appearance, e.g., feeling ashamed or humiliated. Based on the concept, face falls under two types, namely, positive face and negative face. These two faces are related to the desire of the participants involved in the interaction. Negative face emphasises the want of every interactant, which is not imposed or hindered by others. Conversely, a positive face addresses the want of every interactant, which is to be appreciated, praised, accepted, or approved by others. Both are considered prominent dimensions of applying politeness strategies. Face can be saved, maintained, or lost in the interaction context, depending primarily on appropriate and accurate language choice. Consistent with the concept of the face, Lakoff & Ide (2005, p. 4) argued that politeness involves consideration for others. It means that speakers should respect hearers as they have a self-image reflected in both positive and negative faces.

Further, some speaker's acts, like utterances, can potentially damage hearer's face in interaction. As pointed out by Brown & Levinson (1987, pp. 65–67), those acts are categorised into "Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). Several acts threaten positive and negative faces between speaker and hearer in any context of communication, including teacher-student interaction in the classroom. Those acts that attack the negative face of the hearer includes some acts such as giving orders, request, suggestion, advice, warning, reminding, and warning. The acts are threatening face for they impede or hinder hearer's freedom of doing an activity. In this regard, a speaker intends to impose a hearer to do something. In other words, positive face-threatening acts occur because the speaker demands on the hearer, such as in the case of making a request (Leech, 2014). Meanwhile, speaker's acts can also ruin hearer's positive face relating to offers, promises, compliments, disapproval, disagreement, taboo words, and irreverence. The acts are threatening positive face for a speaker who ignores hearer's feelings and wants.

In an attempt to minimise and mitigate the impact of face-threatening acts (FTAs), the interactants can employ politeness strategies by which they can consider redressive action or directly without efforts of face protection. Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 69) best illustrates the strategies to cope with face-threatening acts (FTAs) in figure below:
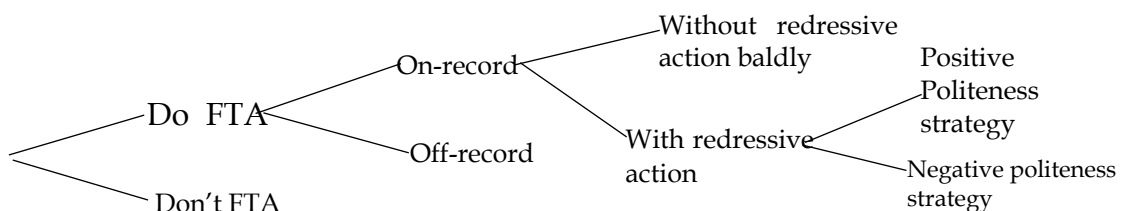

Figure 1: Strategies to cope with FTA

As seen in the figure above, face-threatening acts (FTA) can be approached through redressive action. Interactants can choose two strategies, namely positive politeness strategy and negative politeness strategy. Using a positive politeness strategy endeavour to count for hearer's feelings and wants. For instance, a speaker applies specific words to show disagreement with hearer's opinion politely by twisting utterance. This utterance is marked by exaggerating words and reasons for stating disagreement. In a negative politeness strategy, a speaker utilises "please" to soften his order as well as to minimise the imperative force. Or it can be that a speaker uses questions and hedges to turn directive acts into requests.

2.2 Pragmatic modifiers

Pragmatic modifier is a linguistic unit that indicates polite utterances in communication. It is explicitly stated in utterances. Applying pragmatic modifier is one of salient aspects determining the degree of politeness. Darong et al. (2020) revealed that pragmatic modifier is a useful linguistic expression employed to reduce the speaker's imposition on the hearer, as in the case of making a request. Additionally, pragmatic modifier enhances the positive mood of interaction in any circumstance. It is, therefore, prominently required for interactants to employ linguistic markers as a way of expressing politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that the pragmatic modifier is a linguistic resource for the realisation of politeness. It has motives and effects on communication. One of the pragmatic modifiers suggested is hedge. Hedged markers enact protection of illocutionary force such as giving an order, request, warning, suggestion, and so forth. In classroom interaction, a teacher often performs the act of order by this utterance "if you do not know the answer, you may work with your classmates". The utterance is hedged with clause "if" to lower the imperative force on the students. Hedging is used in various linguistic units, namely, prosodics, lexical items, parentheticals, clauses, and other means.

In pragmatic analysis, politeness can be approached by "pragmatic modifiers" (Leech, 2014, p. 159). It is linguistic device that strengthens and intensifies polite utterances. According to classification, pragmatic modifiers cover two main types, namely internal and external modifiers. Internal modifiers include downtoner (softener and diminisher), politeness marker (please), deliberative opening (hedging), appreciative opening (sweetener), and hedged performative opening. External modifiers contain apologies (disarmer), thanks (propitiator), vocatives, and grounder (move). Based on the theory, pragmatic modifiers are more comprehensive. In EFL classroom interaction, pragmatic modifiers are realised to achieve several instructional goals set by teachers. Different gender of teachers can also contribute to the application of pragmatic modifiers.

2.3 Language and gender

Language use is arguably related to the gender attributes of interactants. Male and female speakers have typical linguistic features. It is seen through manners, choice of lexical items, and syntactical forms that male and female speakers employ in interaction. The difference lies in the perception regarding the weakness of linguistic features in women and the strength of linguistic features in men. This view tends to be less empirical and leads to cultural bias. Therefore, the concept is vague and inapplicable to all contexts of communication. The reason is that female language does not necessarily represent inferiority to superiority. Female speakers produce more talks than males on particular topics in some circumstances. In classroom interaction, the difference in teachers' gender affects the students' preferences for talk (Alshebl, 2021). The study proved that there is a correlation between gender and language use.

Lakoff was initially interested in studying language and gender in 1975 (Coates, 2013; Mesthrie, 2011). The basic assumption is that women show a different way of using language. The findings unfolded several overt features of women's language; those are *lexical hedges*, *empty adjectives*, *tag*

questions, rising intonation on declarative, precise colour terms, super polite forms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, avoidance of swearing words, and emphatic stress (Holmes, 2013, p. 302). Numerous studies have recently identified and claimed several linguistic features of women's language, like in the previous research conducted by(Siregar & Suastra, 2020), who discovered the significant features, namely lexical hedges, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensive adverbs, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, and emphatic stress in the first presidential debate of female-male candidate. These linguistic features generally frame the public perception of women's language use in interaction. However, it is undeniable that the realisation of the given linguistic features is undoubtedly peculiar and varied in the natural contexts. For instance, a female teacher employs more lexical hedges than a male teacher revealing different functions in classroom interaction. Conversely, female speakers exploit limited lexical hedges when talking to different participants outside the classroom setting.

The superpolite form is a particular linguistic feature that differentiates women's language from men's. Due to that, it is even roughly claimed that female language is more polite than male. However, the claim contradicts the empirical evidence of language use across gender. More particularly, politeness is a complex matter when linked to gender and language use. Concerning polite utterances, male and female speakers apply different pragmatic modifiers. Pragmatic modifiers are linguistic devices used by speakers to modify their politeness. In classroom interaction, pragmatic modifiers are realised differently from female and male teachers for desired effects and functions. It can also be related to the distribution of pragmatic modifiers employed by female and male teachers in performing polite utterances to students during teaching-learning sessions. Based on the previous studies of politeness, language and gender, the current research is interested in exploring pragmatic modifiers in male and female teachers' polite requests in a classroom interaction context.

3. Methodology

The qualitative research method was conducted to explore pragmatic modifiers in female and male teachers' polite utterances in the EFL classroom interaction. The method is considered an appropriate research design as the data are the utterances conveyed during the teaching-learning process at high schools in the Manggarai region of eastern Indonesia. Ten male and female teachers were involved as the key participants whose utterances were recorded during teaching EFL at grade XI of three different programs at high schools in Manggarai region, eastern Indonesia.

The data used in the study were extracted from the transcripts of classroom interaction and field notes taken at 12 meetings. Two techniques were applied in this research: direct observation and field note-taking. The type of direct observation is a non-participant observation in which the researcher was not engaged in classroom interaction. In observation, the audio-video recordings were conducted to obtain sufficient, natural-occurring data. Smart Phone Vivo of Y21 and a digital voice recorder of 32 GB were the key instruments used for data collection. Aside from the tools, field-note and observation sheets were also utilised to collect more reliable data.

The study analysed the data through a qualitative interactive model involving three steps: data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusion/verification ((Miles et al., 2014). Data condensation in which the data were selected, simplified, and abstracted for a rich data corpus; in the display, the data was organised, compressed, and presented in table; and the data were then concluded and verified by comparing the data from field notes and observation sheets.

The theory of politeness proposed by (Brown Levinson,1987) was used to analyse and account for pragmatic modifiers. As the data was concerned with utterances as part of linguistic units, the analysis was also conducted by referring to the method of equivalence consisting of five subtypes of the method. Among those subtypes of the method, pragmatic analysis was utilised to determine

words and sentences conveyed by the speaker, causing a particular impact on the hearer. In this research, the participants filled the form of research consent. It contains nine statements ranging from ethical issues, willingness, and cooperation to procedures of data collection and digital data storage.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, this section presents the results regarding the pragmatic modifiers in male and female teachers' polite requests in the EFL classroom interaction context. The findings are categorised into three main parts, namely; (1) pragmatic modifiers in male teachers' polite requests, (2) pragmatic modifiers in female teachers' polite requests, and (3) frequency of occurrence across gender.

4.1 Internal pragmatic modifiers in teachers' polite requests

Internal pragmatic modifiers were employed in male and female teachers' utterances in EFL classroom interaction. The data show that several pragmatic modifiers were used as linguistic devices to maintain politeness. Those are *downtoner, politeness marker, vocatives, appreciative opening (sweetener), disarmer,* and *hedged performative*. The types occurred in different numbers, respectively. It is displayed in table one below.

Table 1: Internal pragmatic modifiers and occurrence in utterances

No	TYPES	MT	FT
1	Downtoner	45	50
2	Politeness marker	65	75
3	Appreciate opening (sweetener)	30	30
4	Hedged performative opening	20	37

Note: MT (Male teachers) and FT (Female Teachers)

As illustrated in table 1 above, four types of internal pragmatic modifiers realised the male teachers' polite requests during classroom interaction. The category of the types is based on the taxonomy of internal pragmatic modifiers suggested by Leech (2014). Out of four internal pragmatic modifiers, the politeness marker was predominantly used in the EFL male teachers' utterances, followed by downtoner, appreciative opening (sweetener), and hedged performative opening. More particularly, politeness markers were attached to the utterances to turn a direct command into a request. In this case, the speakers attempted to minimise the imperative force of the utterance and anticipate the risk of face-threatening acts to the students. The utterances with downtoner were directed to soften and diminish the direct force of the speech event, while the appreciative opening served to sweeten the bitter flavour of directive utterances. The hedged performative opening was the other type of pragmatic modifier employed to soften and minimise the force of performative. Therefore, it is empirically evident that the EFL male teachers' polite utterances were modified and intensified by inserting internal pragmatic modifiers.

As compared to the female teachers' polite requests, it is evident that four types of internal pragmatic modifiers were found in a higher number of occurrences in classroom interaction. The findings indicate that internal pragmatic modifiers varied from male to female teachers. The female teachers, in their utterances, mainly employed politeness markers. Likewise, the other types, such as downtoner, appreciative opening (sweetener), and hedged performative opening, were significantly applied to a greater extent. In this case, the female teachers were more redressive in maintaining politeness during classroom interaction. It can be considered as an indication of gender difference in applying politeness. Regarding function, the four types of internal pragmatic modifiers are similar to those of male teachers' polite requests.

The following parts discuss the extracts of the male teachers'polite utterances to get a clear context of the pragmatic modifiers applied in classroom interaction. The following extracts (1-4) demonstrate how politeness markers were utilised in some data instances.

Extract 1 :

1. Repeat the expression of invitation *please*.
2. *Please* write an invitation of birthday party.
3. Read the invitation in front of the class *please*.
4. Raise your hand *please*, and write the answer.
5. *Please* check the materials on Google Classroom.
6. *Please* sit in a group, and prepare your own presentation.
7. Tell a movie to the class in turn *please*.
8. Pay attention and listen to the group *please*.
9. *Please* use the tools that you have, and then ask and give an opinion about them.
10. *Please* make sure that your task is correct.

The data in extract 1 indicate ten instances of the EFL male and female teachers' polite requests. In the utterances (1-10), the polite marker "please" was applied to alter the direct command to the request. By the alternation, it conveys the nuance of softened imperative. As emphasised by Leech (2014, p. 162), the use of polite marker prompts "the status of the utterance as that of a request". Additionally, it enhances the degree of politeness in directive utterances. The instances revealed that the teachers intended to reduce the effect of imperative utterances that put less pressure on the students and enhance a positive atmosphere during classroom interaction. The speakers also endeavour to avoid the risk of face-threatening acts as the students could not accomplish the requests. Such kinds of utterances enacted "illocutionary modification" (Darong et al., 2020, p. 228). Nevertheless, the teachers' intention requested the students to perform the actions related to the specific instructional activities such as *repeating, writing, reading, raising a hand for turn-taking, checking, sitting, telling, getting attention, listening, using the tools (resource),* and *showing certainty*. In this case, both male and female teachers utilised politeness markers for negative politeness strategy. The female teachers tended to apply more politeness markers than the male teachers for positive impression and value on the students. The male teachers, on the other hand, emphasised more on power relations and different statuses in giving a command to the students(Agustina & Cahyono, 2016).

Downtoner is the internal pragmatic modifier that speakers apply to make a polite request to hearers. The requests with downtoner are typically constructed in a question form and added by modality (could, may, maybe). In EFL classroom interaction, the male teachers employed a downtoner to deliver a polite request to the students. The instances are shown in extract two below concern the use of downtoner in the male teachers' polite requests and the function in instructional activities.

Extract 2

1. *Could you* speak up?
2. *Could you* tell us your favorite story?
3. *Could you* speak a bit louder?
4. *Could you* repeat the answer?
5. *Could you* repeat saying the expressions?
6. *Could you* give me an example of invitation?
7. *May I* have your opinion about our school curriculum?
8. *Could you* do me *a favor* taking an eraser and a boardmarker at the office?

In utterances (1-8), male and female teachers used modality (could, may) as downtoner. The function is to soften and diminish the direct force of a command. Utterances (1) and (3) requested that some

students raise their voices so the whole class could hear them speaking. Utterance (2) was conveyed to the students to take turns telling a story. By such a request, the teachers indirectly instructed the students to perform the intended action. Meanwhile, utterances (4) and (5) addressed a different speaker's intention. In utterance (4), the teacher asked the student to repeat the answer to get the point and give oral corrective feedback. In contrast, in utterance (5), the teacher asked the student to practice pronouncing the expressions fluently and accurately. Further, utterance (6) was purposed to request the student to provide an example as an elaboration of the topic *invitation*. In utterance (7), the teacher asked the student to give an opinion. It was related to *asking and giving an opinion*, and in utterance (8), the teacher begged the student to help her get an eraser and a board marker. Adding the word "a favour "makes a request more polite. Concerning downtoner, the female teachers employed more questions in conveying requests than the male teachers. The communicative goal is to avoid much pressure and direct attack on the negative face of the students in completing the tasks.

In the case of appreciative opening, the male and female teachers applied it as one of the pragmatic modifiers in performing a polite indirect request. It is to sweeten and cover the bitter flavour of directive command. Typically, the construction is declarative with modality (would) and if clause (Leech, 2014)—the instances of the utterances containing appreciative opening illustrated in the following extract.

Extract 3:

1. I *would be happy if* you can use the expression of accepting an invitation.
2. It *would be better if* you write the pattern at first.
3. I *would appreciate if* all students try to speak English during the lesson.
4. It *would be great if* the group uses power point for the presentation.
5. It *would be better if* you write the sentences on the board.
6. I *would be happy if* many students practice English in a group discussion.

The utterances (1-6) contain indirect requests. Appreciate opening marks the politeness. The male and female teachers attempted to show their gratitude and friendliness as a positive attitude and value to the students when performing the actions as being requested. Indirectly, they were instructed to do some tasks. The formulation consists of two patterns; the uncovered speakers as the agent using the first personal pronoun (e.g. I would be…) and the covered speakers with an impersonal pronoun (e.g. it would be….). By this kind of pragmatic modifier, the speakers had lowered the cost to the students and face damage. Nevertheless, there was no difference between the male and female teachers in applying appreciative opening.

The hedged performative opening typically uses interrogation and declarative with modality. It opens the performative acts and aims to soften the illocutionary force of the request. The performative verb *ask* is used with modality (may, would (like), must) (Leech, 2014). The results of the data analysis have revealed that the female teachers employed hedged performative opening in interrogative construction, while the male teachers considered declarative form. The instances of hedged performative opening are seen in extract four below

Extract 4:

1. *I would like to ask* you about topic of invitation.
2. *I must ask* the students to resubmit the last project.
3. Before explaining the topic of invitation further, *I would like to ask* some examples of invitation.
4. *May I ask* some students to perform a short conversation about oral invitation?
5. *May I ask* some students to prepare English Wall Magazine?
6. *May I ask* your attention, please?
7. *Could I ask* your ideas about the group presentation for the next meeting?

In extract 4, male and female teachers modified their polite utterances with hedged performative opening. Utterances (1-3) were expressed by the male teachers; they were constructed in declarative form with modality (*would like, must*) and the performative verb (ask). By the utterances, the male teachers requested the students in a mild way to perform the activities, such as citing the topic, resubmitting the task, and mentioning some examples of invitations. Utterances (4-7) were conveyed by the female teachers; they were formed in interrogative with modality (*may, could*). The female teachers made a request to the students more politely in such a way that they approached the students to act the required tasks.

4.2 External pragmatic modifiers in teachers' polite requests

In addition to using internal pragmatic modifiers, the results show that some external pragmatic modifiers are also attached to the EFL male teachers' polite requests. Those are four types: *disarmer, propitiator, and vocatives*. Each type was found in different occurrences in EFL classroom interaction. Table two below presents the occurrences of the external pragmatic modifiers.

Table 2: External pragmatic modifiers and occurrence in utterance

No	Types	M T	F T
1	Vocative	21	25
2	Disarmer	7	15
3	Propitiator (gratitude)	15	25

Note: MT (Male teachers) and FT (Female Teachers)

As shown in table 2, four types of external pragmatic modifiers appeared in EFL male teachers' polite requests. Vocative, among those types, was primarily employed in classroom interaction. It includes address terms, names, and honorifics. They serve three main functions, namely: to appeal for attention, to show deference, to single out the students, and to build a good relationship. Disarmer was applied to mitigate the effect of hostility and redress persuasion and friendliness. *Propitiator* is the other external modifier that designates gratitude and anticipates the risk of a direct request to the hearers' face damage.

Concerning the data above, it bears that female teachers' polite requests employed more external pragmatic modifiers than the male teachers, ranging from vocatives to propitiators. Those types were applied for achieving the instructional goals in EFL classroom context. The following extracts illustrate the instances of male and female teachers' polite requests.

Vocative is one of the external pragmatic modifiers applied by male and female teachers to make polite requests. The data in extract five indicate the occurrence of vocative conveying three main functions during classroom interaction.

Extract 1

1. Could you give me your suggestion, *Elsa*?
2. *My dear students*, I would like to ask you to practice make an invitation.
3. *Salsa*, please give me your opinion about this story.
4. Okay *students*, please discuss the task in group and present it before the class.
5. Please speak up, *Nike*.
6. Okay *students*, close your book and tell your experience, please.

In making polite requests, the teachers used address terms and names. The male teachers employed a formal address term (e.g. *students* in instances 4 and 6). It points out the power relation with the teachers. In contrast, the female teachers elaborated formal and informal address terms (e.g. *my dear students* in instance 2). It is to minimise the social distance and gap in power relations. However, both male and female sometimes called out the students' names in delivering requests (instances 1, 3, 5).

Regarding the data, vocatives functioned to call out the students, get attention, and to build an intimate teacher-student rapport.

Disarmer is the external pragmatic modifier that appeared in the teachers' polite requests. The markers are the words *excuse me, sorry*. They were employed to disarm the effect of hostility and to address a persuasive approach. The instances below indicate the application of disarmer.

Extract 2

1. *Excuse me*, could you arrange some chairs for the group presentation?
2. *Sorry*, can you speak slowly and clearly?
3. *Sorry*, to interrupt your talk, can you elaborate with some examples?
4. *Excuse me*, can you listen first to the group explanation?
5. Do you mind closing the door? *Sorry*.

As seen in instances (1-4), disarmers mostly occur at the beginning of the requests, whereas in data (5), disarmers can appear at the final position of the request. Aside from the function suggested by (Leech, 2014), the cases of disarmer particularly serve to neutralise the effect of pressure and face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In other words, it is such a kind of compensatory strategy used by male and female teachers.

Propitiator is dealt with showing a speaker's gratitude to a hearer for a request. It is marked by the word *thank*. The following data samples are the propitiator instances in the male and female teachers' requests in classroom interaction.

Extract 3

1. Can you read the expressions loudly? *Thank you*.
2. Could you give more ideas on the topic? *Thank you*.
3. Please take the attendance list at the office. *Thank you*.
4. Please sit in the group silently. *Thank you*.
5. May you all stand up for an opening prayer? *Thank you*.

In extract 3, it is evidently shown that the male and female teachers employed propitiator in making polite requests. The word *thank* is inserted at the final position of the requests. it was not used to state a speaker's agreement to the hearer's act. The male and female teachers applied it to express gratitude to the students, and mainly to anticipate the effect of imposition on the students' faces. By doing so, the teachers expected that the students would respond to the requests in an appropriate act.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation for Further Study

Pragmatic modifiers are the linguistic devices required for delivering a request. They modify and enhance politeness. In a genuine interaction, the realisation of pragmatic modifiers is different from one context to another. Similarly, classroom interaction has its circumstances that affect the use of pragmatic modifiers. Concerning the results of data analysis, some crucial points are drawn at. First, the male and female teachers considered the pragmatic modifiers as the markers to make polite requests in classroom interaction. Second, pragmatic modifiers were subsumed under two main categories, namely internal and external modifiers. The internal modifiers cover *politeness marker, downtoner, appreciative opening, and hedged performative opening*. The external modifiers contain *disarmer, vocative,* and *propitiator*. Third, those types of pragmatic modifiers were applied to achieve instructional objectives. Four, there is a slight difference between male and female teachers in employing pragmatic modifiers for the requests. However, the findings cannot be accounted for women's language features and gender differences. As the implications, future investigation is worth conducting to examine language and gender in performing politeness.

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