ARE MEN MORE POLITE THAN WOMEN? DECONSTRUCT THE POLITENESS STRATEGY IN DISAGREEMENT STATEMENTS

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Article Info	Abstract
	This research aims to find out the politeness strategies used by the participants for stating the disagreement and to disclose the stereotypes about women being more polite than men or not. The data source for this research was obtained from the disagreement statements performed by female and male participants in one of the Vice Debates' episodes entitled Parents, Teachers & Students Debate the US Education System. The qualitative method was used to describe the differences in politeness strategies performed by women and men participants. This research found 37 politeness strategies used by all participants. Men participants produced 24 disagreement statements which contained 3 types of politeness strategies, which are bald-on record, positive politeness, and negative politeness. Positive politeness became the highest strategy used by men participants, it convinced the stereotype that men do not use an emotional approach when responding to the interlocutor is not necessarily true. On the contrary, female participants only delivered 13 disagreement statements but used all of the politeness strategies, which are bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Negative politeness became the highest type and it reassures women do not always use long-winded talk when stating the disagreement.

INTRODUCTION

Men and women are two different creatures that are differentiated by their genitals at the beginning. However, society differentiates the roles between those two genders, in which men have a masculine role that must appear to become brave, though, independent, and assertive in public places. In contrast, women have a feminine role that must be soft-hearted, gentle, and emphatic to others. It happens because women are linked to domestic roles, such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, and other family duties at home. Those stereotypes not only apply to how men and women act but also to how they speak. One of the stereotypes that are widely known among men and women is politeness between women and men. Women tend to be more polite than men, men are often considered rude because they have to be firm in making decisions in public places (Holmes, 1995; Lakoff, 1975). While women tend to be polite because they emphasize the to build connections with other people (Eliasoph, 1987; Coates, 2013). However, equal rights movements arise against those stereotypes and ask for gender equality. Freedom of speech is one of the rights being fought. Freedom of speech is the way people express their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs freely without fear of restriction, suppression, and legal backlash from any institution. Debate is one of the crucial aspects in part of speech because the participants can express their viewpoints on any range of topics. Therefore, this research aims to reveal the politeness strategy in debate to respond to whether the stereotype about women being more polite than men still applies or not.

There are many kinds of debates such as policy debates, congressional debates, parliamentary debates, public forum debates, etc. This kind of debate is differentiated based on participants, circumstances, and topics. This activity is often carried out by several people to find out each other's opinions on issues that occur in society. In the digital era, everyone can share their opinions through comments section on social media or live debates held by several media companies. Some media companies want to know the civilians' opinions about some issues or the government's decision. This kind of debate is called a public forum debate, where some civilians from any background gather in one room and the moderator asks some questions about an issue. Vice is one of the media companies that held this kind of debate.

Vice is a digital media and broadcasting company that provides several genres, such as culture, news, music, fashion, lifestyle, etc. The youth generation has become their target audience, so they use social media to promote their content. YouTube is one of them. There are many series on their YouTube channel, such as travel guides, movie reviews, behind-the-scenes, debates, and many more. This research focuses on the serial debate entitled Vice Debates, it has 6 episodes that aired from December 2022 until February 2023. However, this

research took the data from the newest episode entitled Parents, Teachers & Students Debate the US Education System. They all gather in one room and share their ideas about the question that is being asked. There are many different points of view about one thing and there are a lot of disagreement statements.

The disagreement statement has become the limitation of this research because debate appears when there are two or more opposing sides about any topics that are being talked about. Besides, in pragmatics disagreement falls into the category of Face Threatening Acts (FTA). It means that the interlocutor is intimidated by the speaker as someone who has control over the communication (Yule, 2018). Because of that, disagreement often be avoided in communication to keep off the conflict and misunderstanding. However, disagreement cannot be separated from human everyday life because every person has their idea. Thus, people tend to use implicit utterances to present politeness in communication.

Politeness is the act of doing something to respect other people. Someone can be said to be polite if that person has principles such as being humble, sympathetic, wise, etc. This principle is closely related to the culture and beliefs that exist in every society. It can be said that politeness has a connection with every culture in the world because every culture has its own beliefs and it shows how culture influences individuals to address each other, express a compliment, gratitude, or disagreement. It is supported by several kinds of research by Brocca et al., (2023), Slman & Betti (2020), and Yan (2016). Apart from culture, some previous researches examine politeness as influenced by some factors, such as generational and age gap (Alrabee' et al., 2023; Masruddin et al., 2023; Rahayuningsih et al., 2020), the similarities of these researches' results are the older generation often used formal language and negative politeness rather more than the younger generation. Other than that, politeness is also influenced by gender (Aini et al., 2023; Elyas et al., 2022; Hinck et al., 2024; Torres, 2020; Wijayanti et al., 2022). Those researches show that women often applied politeness strategies to maintain social relationships, self-esteem, and demonstrate humility. Meanwhile, men use politeness strategies to emphasize opinions and maintain their integrity.

Politeness strategies become one of the most interesting studies in the pragmatics field because they can unfold some social factors as can be seen in previous research. However, no research has been found regarding politeness strategies used in disagreement between males and females. Apart from that, the previous research did not disclose the prevailing stereotypes about politeness among men and women with various backgrounds. This research's data came from various backgrounds, such as beliefs, culture, age, and ideology, and there were no

political interests. Therefore, this research's result is expected to enhance another perspective on language and gender studies, especially in politeness and gender.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Politeness Strategies

Politeness is a basic manner of communication, someone can be called polite if they are wise, modest, and kind to others either in acting or speaking (Yule, 1996). In line with Fraser's (1990) statement, politeness is when someone succeeds in adjusting themselves to the existing norms, while impoliteness is the opposite situation. Conforming with that, House (2012) stated that politeness is influenced by several things, such as the speaker's background and context. In communication, politeness usually is expressed indirectly because the locutor does not want to embarrass themselves or the interlocutor, or in the pragmatics, it can be called face-saving acts (FSA). The face's concept here means someone's pride thus politeness exists to maintain the self-esteem of the speaker (S) or the hearer (H).

The face concept is divided into two, which are the positive face and the negative face. A positive face is the way S or H maintains their self-image in public, while a negative face is the way S wants to act or say something freely without any interruption. Yule (1996) stated that people tend to protect their positive face, so that person commits *face-threatening acts* (FTA) without their realization. In line with Brown & Levinson (1987), they believe politeness appears because someone is doing FTA as shown in Figure (1) and there are some types of politeness strategies.
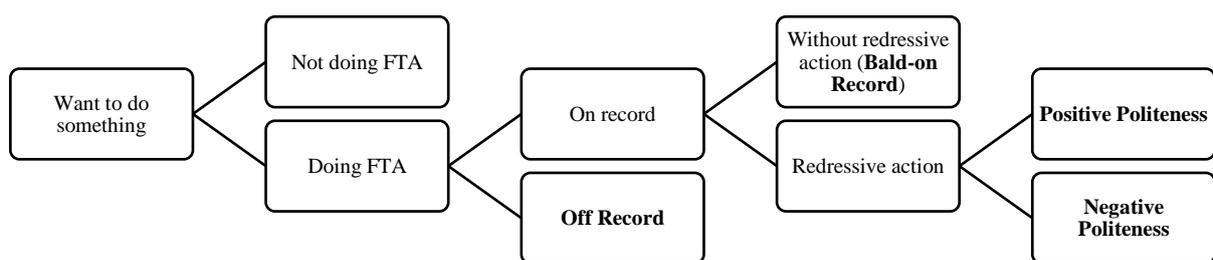

Figure 1: The Form of Politeness Strategies

Bald-on Record

This strategy appears when S wants to do FTA to make the conversation efficient (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is usually used in an urgent situation that requires short messages, such as "slow down", "listen, my point is…", etc. From that example can be seen this type used the

most explicit strategy to express the speech directly. Command sentences become one of the characteristics of this type to avoid misunderstanding between locutor and interlocutor.

Positive politeness

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), positive politeness is used when the locutor gives empathic responses to the interlocutor to save the positive face of both faces. The main focus of the characteristic of this strategy is exaggerating what is about to say, e.g. "Goodness, you cut your hair! You look so fresh in this style! By the way, I came to borrow some flour." the locutor used that utterance to avoid conflict by showing similar interest or agreement. It is used to show there is solidarity and intimacy between the locutor and interlocutor.

Negative politeness

This strategy aims to show the interlocutor's negative face. It means that the locutor does not want to bother the interlocutor's freedom of speech or action by minimizing the utterance. For example, "Can you pass the salt?" or "It was amazing, wasn't it?" that utterance shows there is an indirect expression by questioning and using hedge words, which, become a characteristic of this strategy.

Off-record

In this strategy, the locutor used an implicit speech to say something and let the interlocutor interpret it. In other words, the locutor uses code when expressing something, e.g. "Oh God, I've got a headache again." or "Lovely neighborhood, eh?" the first utterance can be interpreted into two meanings, either the locutor wants to tell about their actual condition or the locutor giving a code that they want to go home. The second example shows the locutor giving a sarcastic comment by saying "Eh?" By way of those explanations, this strategy puts the safest position for the locutor but it can be misinterpreted if the interlocutor does not know the context or is sensitive to surroundings.

Language and Gender

Language and gender is a phenomenon that exists because of some different perspectives on social structure and inequality of rights between males and females in society (Jinyu, 2014). There were many stereotypes about males and females, for example, males tend to be more competitive than females in public fields (Gu, 2013). That stereotype affects the way they speak, such as females speaking more gently and politely, while males were likely more arrogant and assertive during the discussion session. There was also a study about women's language from Coates (2013) that mentioned females often use interrogative sentences when asking for something, avoid taboo and rude words, and give compliments directly to others.

Whereas males tend to use rough language to instruct something, they also use taboo and rude words more often (Lakoff, 1975).

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method to collect each politeness strategy. Also, this research used a critical analysis perspective to identify the differences in politeness strategies used by female and male participants. The data source was taken from the newest episode of the Vice Debate series on YouTube, which was aired on the 12th of April 2023, entitled Parents, Teachers & Students Debate the US Education System. Vice Debates used a public forum debate system, which consists of two teams that bring the pros and cons arguments. This type of debate usually has topics about current issues and is designed accessible to the public.

There were 9 participants, which were 5 males and 4 females, in the episode of Parents, Teachers & Students Debate the US Education System. The number of female and male participants was not too different, therefore the participants' utterance is expected to be a representation of the politeness strategies used by females and males. The researcher did three steps to collect the data which were watched the selected episode. The next step is to transcribe all of the utterances. In the last step, the researchers sort the disagreement statements to analyze. After getting the disagreement statement, the researchers carried out data analysis in four steps, (1) identify the data by giving some codes to differentiate the politeness strategies. (2) Classification of the data, aims to divide into some groups based on each strategy. (3) Describing the data, after seeing the comparison of politeness strategies used by male and female participants, data is described based on language and gender perspective. (4) Conclude the data, the researchers conclude to complete the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of this research shows there are 37 disagreement statements used by female and male participants in the debate. Female participants used all of the politeness strategies while male participants only used three out of four politeness strategies, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Frequency of Politeness Strategies in Vice Debate

No.	Politeness Strategy	Frequency		Total
		Female	Male	
1	Bald-on record	3	6	9
2	Positive politeness	4	11	15
3	Negative politeness	5	7	12
4	Off record	1	0	1
	Total	13	24	37

Positive politeness becomes the most dominant type with 15 utterances, then negative politeness appears 12 times, followed by bald-on record with 9 utterances, while off record becomes the least type that appears in the utterances. The table above also shows the number of differences between female and male participants, which shows that male participants used politeness strategies more often than female participants. The further explanations about the result are as follows.

Bald-on record

This strategy is known as the most direct strategy among all of the strategies. It is because the locutor wants to maximize the FTA, thus it does not need small talk when expressing disagreement. In this research occurred 9 times, which 3 times uttered by female participants and 6 times uttered by male participants. The following excerpts show the bald-on record strategy used by female participants, as shown in excerpts (1) and (2), while male participants shown in excerpts (3) and (4).

(1) ZH: **I can confidently say** that there are teachers who are not teaching very key facts of American History because critical race Theory conversations have so clouded the teaching of history as an entire like whole.

(2) KD: **that's why I wouldn't raise my hand**

The participant in excerpt (1) is against the critical race theory (CRT) that is being taught for the K-12 curriculum saying "I can confidently say". Those words show that the locutor wants to make an efficient statement and tell the interlocutor that she is certain about her opinion that resisting CRT is not that important for children. It is because rather than being taught about the race's background history, many teachers taught there was a time when society differentiated the social class based on race, for example, black people used to be slaves. So, it is considered to be able to degrade black children's mentality. Other than that, CRT is a method for reviewing racism from the historical and social reality perspective, which can be useful to end the racism problem in the U.S.A. However, the interlocutor considered that CRT was too complicated to be taught for K-12 students. In addition, the interlocutor wants to do the FTA to the interlocutor by saying those words.

Excerpt (2) shows that the participant contra towards the school choice program in the U.S.A. The participant said, "I wouldn't raise my hand." It shows that she wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency. School choice program means the parents can choose their children's schools out of zoning area and they can choose between public or private schools.

The interlocutor assesses through this program, that the funds' distribution is unequal between public and private schools and it makes a highly competitive market.

    (3) CP: **it's still the right of the parent to make that decision as to whether or not they want their child to learn from you.**

    (4) PS: **mind you** with the whole concept of school choice.

    The participant in excerpt (3) expressed that he disagrees with his interlocutor about the male teacher who wears make-up while teaching the student. He used the BOR strategy to convey his opinion because he wanted to maximize the threat to the interlocutor's face and wanted to talk straight to the point. In excerpt (4) the participant used "mind you" as the first words to tell his different opinion about the school choice. It means he wants to emphasize the information and it can show the interlocutor's negative face.

    From those excerpts and explanations, BOR is used when the interlocutor wants to directly convey their opinion about something and it is used to minimize the FTA. Thus, this strategy is often called a direct strategy. Moreover, BOR is used by female and male participants because all participants in the episode of Parents, Teachers & Students Debate the US Education System are faced with an urgent situation. It means they need to respond to their interlocutor's statement as soon as possible. So, the pattern used by the participants is the same, which used BOR followed by opinion and reasons behind it. This result conforms with several previous studies which stated that the use of BOR was used to express clear and unambiguous meaning so as not to prioritize FTA (Rahayuningsih et al., 2020; Rosyidah, 2021).

Positive politeness

    Positive politeness is used when the locutor wants to satisfy the interlocutor's face by giving sympathy or respectful words or acts. Exaggerating utterances has become one of the characteristics of this strategy. The female participants are shown in excerpts (5) and (6), while male participants are shown in excerpts (7) and (8).

    (5) KD: **I like the idea** of the collaboration, and obviously parents' voices belong at that table. **I also like** the emphasis on students having a say in this and also other people that adults that aren't parents. **I'm invested in that too** even though I don't have children of my own and **I hear what you're saying** about having to like parents needing to confront or address, I guess? like what kids are learning at school **but giving kids the exposure to other ideas or other things that they wouldn't be exposed to otherwise**

> **is, I think, part of what's going to help raise the next generation of people that are able to look outside their own lived experience.**

(6) KP: so, **let's just say** that for the people that homeschool isn't an option, that is for so many people it's not. **I do not think that school choice is the way to go about.**

The female participant in excerpt (5) expresses much information in the beginning, like in the words "I like the idea". "I also like", "I'm invested in that too", and "I hear what you're saying." Those words show sympathy and give an agreement opinion, but the locutor used those words to save the interlocutor's positive face. Afterward, the locutor expresses her disagreement about the parents who limit their children's knowledge about the world, either positive or negative, just because they need to follow their parent's ideology. She expresses this by saying "but giving kids the exposure to other ideas or other things" This kind of tone has become the characteristic of positive politeness.

The same pattern is used by the other participant, as shown in excerpt (6). Positive politeness usually puts the interlocutor's feelings first, thus the locutor says the engaging words with saying "let's just say that …" to show that she seems to agree with the interlocutor's idea. Then she expressed her different thoughts by saying "I do not think that school choice is the way to go about." It expresses that she does not agree with the school choice program.

(7) DF: **I wouldn't push back** though and say that there does need to be collaboration right? **I completely respect your idea** that it is not our job as Educators to put forth a belief in front of children right? That includes not perpetuating parents' beliefs in the classroom as well. **In my opinion, that would be keeping a non-biased viewpoint, simply presenting issues, and then allowing kids to decide for themselves.**

(8) ST: to really make this micro, you know, **the way I see it is there is no reason that kids of a certain age, right?** Because it's different, teaching with a six-year-old and teaching to a 17 years-old or in college, shouldn't learn about the history of slavery, the history of redlining, you know, the history of Italians being lynched in this country, etc. **…** like in Cupertino California where you have seven and eight-year-olds who are being sat down and said okay time to do a privilege exercise, let's write out you know where you are on the power prism. because that can create situations where students have warped views of themselves especially if they're young **and I don't think it's appropriate, because of the emotional impact, like on Phill.**

Male participants in excerpts (7) and (8) also showed positive politeness to interact with the interlocutor. Excerpt (7) shows that the participant does not directly utter his disagreement,

but he reassures the interlocutor by saying "I wouldn't push back" and "I completely respect your idea" to show respect to the other's idea though he does not agree with it. In the end, he shared his thoughts by saying "In my opinion, that would be keeping a non-biased viewpoint, simply presenting issues, and then allowing kids to decide for themselves." This means he does not agree with the interlocutor about the school or the teacher giving doctrine to any ideology in the class. The participant wants to save the interlocutor's face by satisfying their ego first.

Excerpt (8) shows the same pattern of positive politeness where the participant seems to agree with the interlocutor's idea. It appears when he gives tag question to his utterance to make he was doubting his statement, as in "You know, the way I see it is there is no reason that kids of a certain age, right?" eventually he has an opposite opinion about the CRT as a subject. He disagreed to give CRT for the student as in "and I don't think it's appropriate, because of the emotional impact, like on Phill."

This research shows that male and male participants used positive politeness because all of the participants were meeting for the first time in this debate forum. Therefore, all participants maintained a positive face to respect their interlocutor. This reason is in line with the definition of positive politeness, which is prioritizing the interlocutor's positive face to express solidarity between the locutor and the interlocutor, so the locutor shows sympathy for the interlocutor. Agrees with Slman & Betti (2020) and Rahayuningsih et al. (2020) who state the function of positive politeness is to show that the interlocutor can respect and maintain social relationships with interlocutors even if they have different opinions.

Negative politeness

Redressive action directed towards the interlocutor's negative face is known as negative politeness. It means the locutor wants to respect the interlocutor's freedom of expression by using several linguistic characteristics, such as hedges, conventional indirectness, etc. (Brown & Levinson, 1987). That kind of characteristic has been found in this research as follows.

(9) KP: **What CRT means, to me, is obviously really different from what it means to you.**

(10) **KF: just because that happens in the home, doesn't mean that we need to label all parents as not capable of teaching sex to their children and giving it to the teachers.**

Excerpts (9) and (10) were uttered by female participants and it shows that the locutor wants to respect the interlocutor's negative face. The locutor in the except (9) emphasizes her opinion by using performative utterances. The locutor uses that to point out that her opinion

about CRT is different from the interlocutor's. Her thought about CRT is not about differentiating between white people and people of color, but it taught about the ripple effect of it that still happens these days. In the excerpt (10), the locutor avoids using the pronounce 'I' and 'you' in her utterance to respect the interlocutor's negative face. She states her opinion as a person who supports the home-schooling program, which is the parents take all the responsibilities for the children's academics, including sex education. The interlocutor states that sex education should be taught by teachers in school and must be started since elementary school because each student has different home conditions, some of the parents might not support teaching about sex education at an early age. However, the locutor has a different opinion about that and she expresses it by using negative politeness.

(11) CP: **well,** I don't think we should be teaching white privilege in the classroom.

(12) PS: **could that be a long-term solution though? if a large population chose to choose that lifestyle? there would be no children.**

Male participants are shown in excerpts (11) and (12). Excerpt (11) shows that the locutor uses a hedge in his utterance to express the disagreement by using the word "well" in the beginning. Hedge is usually used to show that someone is not sure about their utterance and it becomes one of the negative politeness characteristics. The locutor states that the CRT should not be taught about differentiating the privileges obtained between races. The participant in the excerpt (12) uses a question followed by a statement to show his disagreement point. Question is also one of the characteristics of negative politeness because the locutor does not directly blame the interlocutor's opinion. The locutor disagrees with the teachers who support same-sex marriage backgrounds because it can indoctrinate the students to do the same way. Therefore, the locutor does not to offend people with the same background so he uses negative politeness.

Negative politeness was ranked as the second most used strategy by male and female participants because all participants wanted to respect their interlocutor's opinion by using soft words, hedges, and passive sentences. These kinds of words were used to avoid the FTA effect and to show attention to the interlocutor (Foley, 2020). Apart from that, Coates (2013) states negative politeness strategies are also commonly used by locutors and interlocutors who have a far social distance. Those theories related to the participants who were not close to each other and did not know each other life backgrounds.

Off-record

This strategy is the safest strategy among all of the politeness strategies because the locutor wants to do an FTA but also avoids the responsibility of saying it out loud. The interlocutor usually says the disagreement implicitly, so they let the interlocutor interpret it themselves. This kind of strategy was just found one time in this research and only a female participant did it, as shown in excerpt (13).

(13)　KF: **should it be taught to our children? Should it be and should we be telling black kids that you're going to get discriminated against because of the color of their skin, with loans with redlining blah blah?**

The participant above shows that she explicitly said that she has the opposite point of view about the way teachers taught CRT in the class. However, she questioned it and let the interlocutor presuppose her real opinion about CRT. It happened because the locutor and interlocutor have the same knowledge about CRT, but they have different points of view.

Off-record is the least used strategy because this is the most indirect strategy. So, it can confuse the interlocutor, whereas, in a debate forum, the clarity of the locutor's opinion is needed to express directly. This result is supported by research from Ayuningrum et al (2018) and 'Azzah & Mujiyanto (2023) which stated that the use of indirect strategies in debate forums is ineffective because it minimizes the FTA too much, so it can create implied meanings and irresponsible opinions.

The Different Politeness Strategy Used by Female and Male Participants

As shown in table (1), the male participants have a higher number than the female participants while stating the disagreement. It is inversely proportional with Lakoff's (1975) theory that female tends to be more polite. Brown (1980) also stated that females may tend to use positive politeness strategies among other females than males do in most societies. This research proves that males can be more polite when they disagree about something. This research also found that male participants use positive politeness more often than female participants, it happens in mixed-gender conversations where the locutor is faced with several people with different gender at once. This result also has opposing views with Brown (1993) and Holmes's (1995) theory that states females tend to use positive politeness more than males because females are more concerned with the interlocutor's feelings. This research showed that the male participants tend to show their respect towards their interlocutor by agreeing and reassuring the statement, and then the locutor gives another explanation about their honest point of view. The aim of using positive politeness is the locutor wants to appreciate the interlocutor's

face while doing the FTA. (Mills, 2003) states that positive politeness often correlates with being friendly and kind to other people. The reason female participants used positive politeness in mixed-gender conversations is that they wanted to explain the background story of why they have opposite opinions. This strategy only appears 4 times in female participants.

Negative politeness is the second politeness strategy most used by the participants. The result showed that male participants had a higher number than the female participants. Negative politeness is often associated with the interlocutor having the same position as the locutor, and they have a distant relationship (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, sometimes this strategy is marked by questions, hedges, apologies, deference, etc. because the interlocutor and the locutor want to respect each other and to avoid misunderstanding. The male participants mostly used this strategy to emphasize their statement, but they also used hedges and questions to express their disagreement. While female participants used strategy mostly to humble themselves while talking with the interlocutor.

Bald on record showed 9 times used by both male and female participants. The male and female participants used a bald-on record to directly state their disagreement to maximize the FTA. The male participants used this strategy for two functions, firstly, to make the conversation as efficient as possible, and secondly, to show that the male participants have a higher position than the interlocutor. The female participants used this strategy to quickly state that they had contradicted the opinion of the interlocutor. Off-record is the least strategy that appears, it is only used by female participants once. The participant used this strategy to save her face in stating the disagreement, this result is in line with Brown and Levinson (1987), who state that off-record is a strategy that is used to hide the intention of what the locutor said.

CONCLUSION

This research focuses on the use of politeness strategy in disagreement statements by male and female participants in one of the Vice Debates entitled Parents, Teachers & Students Debate the US Education System and to find out about the stereotypes that females are not always more polite than males. This research's data showed there are 37 disagreement statements by the participants. Female participants used all of the politeness strategies and it was found 13 times, while the male participants used three politeness strategies and it occurred 24 times. That result showed that male participants often used politeness strategies than the female participants. It contradicts the stereotypes that say females are more polite than males. This research also showed that male participants often used positive politeness, which means that male participants also cared about the interlocutor's feelings. Other than that, this research

also proves that the politeness strategies used by male and female participants depend on the context and closeness of the social relationship. Additionally, politeness strategies do not determine the power possessed by males or females. However, the limitation of this research is that it only used one episode of Vice Debate and was conducted on mixed-gender conversation. Therefore, it is hoped that further research can complement this research by researching same-gender and mixed-gender conversations, also further research will discuss the power and distance between the locutor and interlocutor. Thus, the future research results are more complex and complete in finding politeness strategies.

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