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Exploring Students' Engagement Levels through the Speech Politeness Theory
Case Study: Second Year EFL Students at Moulay Tahar University, Saida.

A thesis submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my investigation, except where otherwise stated.

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Dedication

To my mother, loving memory of my father, siblings, and friends, for their unwavering support and belief in me. This thesis is a testament of my gratitude.

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My acknowledgments extend to Dr. Nour El Houda Remil, my thesis supervisor, whose guidance, insightful advice, and unwavering support proved invaluable in the completion of this research project. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the committee who generously dedicated their time and expertise to the review and evaluation of this work.

I extend my deepest appreciation to all of my professors for fostering a fun and supportive learning environment and enriching my academic journey.

Abstract

The field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) has seen a significant shift in recent years, moving away from teacher-centered instruction and towards approaches that emphasize student participation. In the same vein, the focus on student engagement has led to a growing recognition of the importance of creating a positive and interactive classroom environment. The speech politeness theory emerges as a framework for exploring politeness strategies within EFL classrooms. The case study of this work is students and teachers of second year English language at the department of English, University of Saida, Dr. Moulay Tahar. A set of sixty five (65) students and seven (7) teachers participated in this research. By applying Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the study investigates how teachers' use of polite language strategies can enhance student engagement and participation. This work has the potential to significantly improve the learning environment for EFL learners, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes. The results of this research showcase a positive correlation between increased awareness of politeness strategies and high student engagement. Moreover; the findings indicate that the implementation of a tailored set speech politeness strategies fosters higher student engagement levels. Lastly, a higher awareness of these strategies leads to better engagement in the classroom.

Keywords: Academic Performance, EFL Classrooms, Moulay Tahar University, Speech Politeness Theory, Student engagement, TEFL

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List of Abbreviations:

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FTA: Face-Threatening Acts

NP : Negative Politeness

NPS : Negative Politeness Strategie

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

General Introduction

As the field of Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) continues to evolve and adapt, great attention is given to the quality of speech, the use of politeness strategies, and maintaining overall positive interactions among both students and between students and teachers during the learning process. In this vein, this study seeks to address how teachers' use of politeness strategies can influence engagement in EFL classrooms.

The present study uses the speech politeness theory to explore the engagement levels of EFL learners. Since the concept of politeness is essential for educational spaces, using the speech politeness theory to dissect EFL classroom interactions can provide insights for educators to enhance teaching approaches.

This research aims to apply the speech politeness theory to depict the engagement rates of students of second-year EFL learners. It also seeks to investigate the potential impact of politeness strategies on learners' willingness to engage amongst themselves and with teachers during the educational journey.

In this regard, this study includes the following research objectives:

1. To evaluate The Speech politeness impact in promoting engagement in second year EFL classrooms.
2. To measure the effectiveness of different strategies for increasing second-year EFL students' engagement through the use of speech politeness.
3. To raise the students' and teachers' awareness towards the use of politeness strategies in EFL classrooms.

The current research attempts to answer the following research questions and test their corresponding research hypotheses:

1. What is the role of speech politeness in promoting engagement in second-year EFL classrooms?
2. What is the effectiveness of different strategies for increasing second-year EFL students' engagement through the use of speech politeness?
3. How can the awareness of students and teachers be raised regarding the use of politeness strategies in classrooms?

To address the research questions mentioned earlier, the researcher aims to confirm the following research hypotheses:

1. Speech politeness promotes engagement in second-year EFL classrooms by creating a more positive and respectful learning environment.
2. The implementation of tailored speech politeness strategies positively influences student engagement levels in second-year EFL classrooms.
3. Increased awareness and understanding of politeness strategies among students and teachers lead to an increase in student engagement in second-year EFL classrooms.

The research population is composed of second-year EFL students and teachers of English Department from, the University of Saida, Dr Moulay El Tahar. To accomplish the work's objectives and answer the research questions, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, utilizing a semi-structured student questionnaire, Teacher semi-structured interviews and in class observation. These were distributed amongst students and teachers of second year English language at the department of English, University of Saida, Dr. Moulay Tahar.

This research is divided into three major chapters. The first chapter provides a detailed theoretical overview about

The First chapter highlights the groundwork for this research by reviewing existing literature on student engagement and politeness theory. It provides detailed definition of engagement and related concepts. In addition, it explores the specific context of engagement in EFL classrooms

The second chapter delves into the methodological framework utilized in the present study. Initially, the research design is introduced, followed by an overview of the data collection methods. The chapter then describes the characteristics of the population and explains sampling techniques used to select participants.

The last chapter presents the different findings of the research. It offers a detailed discussion of the results.

Chapter One

Chapter One

1.1. Introduction

Recently, English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers have shifted their focus to teaching pragmatics and cultural components of the target language rather than only grammatical principles. This increased focus on communication in real-world contexts presents its challenges. Navigating the complexity of cultural nuances, language barriers, and diverse learning styles can be challenging, however, Politeness emerges as a crucial tool teachers can employ. These challenges highlight the need for effective communication strategies in EFL classrooms. Brown and Levinson's pioneering theory (1987) emphasized "face" preservation and minimization of "face-threatening acts" which provides a valuable solution to these challenges. EFL teachers view this theory in the unique context of teaching EFL as the key to unlocking student engagement in EFL classrooms. However, the concept of engagement itself is multifaceted. By examining these theoretical frameworks and investigating existing research on the interplay between politeness and engagement in EFL contexts, the present chapter aims to explore existing research on politeness and engagement in EFL contexts. The first section unpacks the multifaceted concept of engagement, covering behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. In the subsequent section, the focus shifts to politeness theories. Then, Brown and Levinson's (1987) foundational framework is thoroughly explored.

Through a close examination of these two areas, the literature review aims to establish a foundation for understanding how politeness strategies can potentially influence student engagement in EFL classrooms.

1.2. Engagement Definition

Engagement presents a challenge of its own. A universal definition of the term has not been agreed upon yet (Boekaerts, 2016). The consensus within academic settings entails that engagement is a blend of mental states and behaviors. Additionally, Azevedo (2015) states

that engagement is one of the most widely misused and over-generalized constructs found in the educational, learning, instructional, and psychological sciences” (Azevedo, 2015). Therefore, the multidimensional concept of student engagement has explored and introduced diverse definitions that shed light on its various aspects.

As Azevedo (2015) further affirms “This is based on the fact that engagement is often used synonymously, interchangeably or implicitly with other related terms such as motivation or flow”. Therefore, this ambiguity makes it challenging to measure and compare research findings on engagement.

As the importance of the concept of engagement gained momentum, other explanations and definitions of student engagement have emerged. Student engagement can be linked to academic achievement, time, effort, and involvement that a student applies affects these results (Beer, Clark, & Jones, 2010). Stovall (2003) defined engagement as the amount of time spent on assignments and the desire to participate in activities, while Rotermund (2011) focuses on a simpler definition: active participation in school. In contrast, Gunuc, Artun, Yigit, and Keser (2022) define engagement as a desire, need to learn and participate in the learning process to be successful.

Despite the lack of a clear and universal definition of student engagement, there is at least some consensus that engagement is a multidimensional construct, whereby the number of identified dimensions of engagement differs among researchers (Boekaerts, 2016). Therefore, it is suggested that while there's agreement that engagement is multifaceted, the specific dimensions vary among researchers. In order to define the concept of engagement, it should be dismantled into three interrelated dimensions.

1.2.1. Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement has been a topic of interest for plenty of researchers in the field of EFL. It has been measured and examined in various ways. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) describe behavioral engagement as “the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities” Indicators of behavioral engagement can vary based on context, but some common examples include, effort, participation, time on task, compliance with classroom norms, and even disruptive behaviors. Researchers actively combine several of these indicators into broader categories. For instance, Fredricks et al. (2004) grouped participation, effort, concentration, and persistence together. The latter can make engagement easier to measure and analyze.

Mercer, Talbot, and Wang (2021) have claimed that observational data on student engagement is highly problematic. Mercer et al. (2021) found that students perceive pretending to be engaged not as impolite, but rather as a sign of respect and politeness. They view simulating engagement as a way to avoid disturbing others or disrupting the class. Within this context, students perceive projecting engagement as a sign of respect for the teacher and a way to avoid disrupting the classroom.

In their work, Hospel, Galand, and Janosz (2016) have identified five distinct aspects of behavioral engagement: participation, following instructions, withdrawal, disruptive behavior ,and absenteeism. They (2016) have enabled a more accurate measurement of behavioral engagement, thereby revealing the multifaceted nature of student engagement.

Behavioral engagement is often assessed due to the ease of observing and measuring its indicators. Also, Behaviors like participation, time on task, and effort can signal a student's overall academic engagement. These indicators reflect the extent to which students actively participate in schooling (Hospel et al., 2016).

1.2.2. Cognitive Engagement

The cognitive dimension of engagement can be understood through a psychological lens. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) have defined it as the thoughtful investment and willingness to exert the effort required to grasp complex concepts, develop challenging skills, and ultimately achieve deep understanding.

Furthermore, Skinner and Belmont (1993) have defined cognitive engagement as the level of thinking students use to understand complex ideas and master challenging skills. Greene (2015) determined that cognitive engagement is a reliable predictor of academic achievement. This aligns with research suggesting a positive correlation between deep cognitive engagement and academic achievement.

1.2.3. Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement refers to how an individual feels. Gunuc and Kuzu (2015) have suggested that emotional engagement refers to “positive emotions like students’ interest and happiness in class”. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) have described emotional engagement as the positive and negative reactions a student feels toward teachers, peers, coursework, and school. Emotional engagement facilitates the creation of bonds to the institution and promotes a willingness to do the required work to be successful in school. In addition, Understanding the positive aspects of emotional engagement and the role of both positive and negative reactions is crucial for fostering a supportive learning environment.

Since the concept of emotional engagement overlaps with other terms in the existing research, research on emotional engagement is uncommon. Nevertheless, the definitions in studies on emotional engagement are considerably less thorough and detailed compared to those used in motivation research. Consequently, definitions used in emotional engagement research are seen as more general (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Li and Lerner (2013) have studied the intersectionality of the three dimensions of engagement (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive). They have concluded that emotional engagement is a contributor to participation (behavioral engagement). Moreover, emotional engagement also increases cognitive capacity (cognitive engagement). Instead, cognitive engagement was found to positively influence emotional engagement and vice versa (Li & Lerner, 2013).

In general, engagement comprises behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components. Moreover, within this framework, factors such as immersion, motivation, and the flow of learners significantly impact engagement.

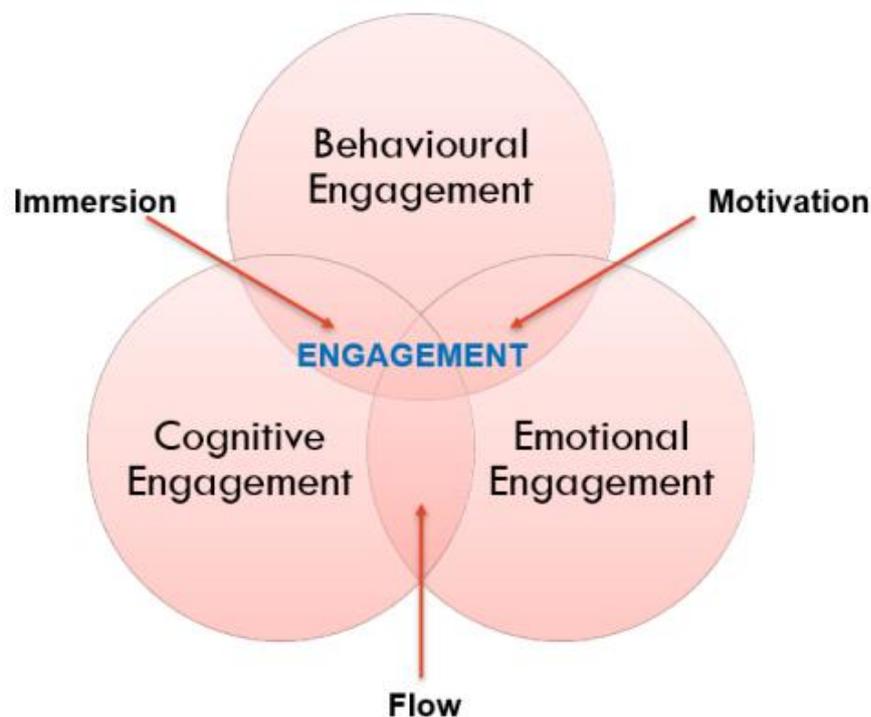


Figure 1.1. Diagrammatic representation of engagement (Judd, 2022)

Judd's (2022) diagram may offer a valuable tool for comprehending the complexities of student engagement. Through the use of a Venn diagram format, it visually represents the interplay between the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of engagement. Each

circle includes a dimension, i.e. the cognitive dimension, the emotional dimension, and the behavioral dimension. Areas of overlap between the circles could highlight how these dimensions interact and influence each other. This type of visual representation can be particularly insightful for educators, as it can help them identify strategies that target and cultivate various aspects of student engagement within the classroom.

1.3. Difference Between Engagement and Other Constructs

The conceptualization of engagement is often criticized as over generalized and the construct is frequently used interchangeably or synonymously with other constructs such as motivation, interest, or flow (Azevedo, 2015:84). Azevedo's (2015) point highlights a critical issue in understanding student engagement. Without clear boundaries between engagement and related constructs, it becomes difficult to develop a theoretical framework for studying engagement in educational settings. This section delves into the frequently used constructs like motivation, interest, and flow. Through establishing a clear distinction from the engagement construct, a better understanding of each concept can be achieved.

1.3.1. Engagement and Flow

Student engagement is a frequently discussed concept in education, and the construct of flow holds a close association with it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1985). He (1985) has described flow as a state of complete absorption in an activity characterized by optimal challenge. Research suggests a connection between engagement and flow. Students who are highly engaged may experience flow when presented with tasks that offer a balance between challenge and skill level (cf. Whitson & Consoli, 2009). A crucial requirement for the occurrence of flow is the number of challenges posed by a task. This state becomes attainable only when the task is neither too challenging nor not challenging enough. For example, consider a scenario involving a writing prompt. Tasks lacking sufficient challenge can lead to boredom and

disengagement. They fail to stimulate cognitive processes and consequently hinder the flow of experience.

1.3.2. Engagement and Motivation

Motivation is another construct closely intertwined with engagement. It is misconceived that motivation and engagement can be used interchangeably. But, they demonstrate evident differences. Motivation is the drive and energy that is required to do things, justifying why an individual is doing the action, while engagement is a reflection of that drive, as evidenced by behaviors that are displayed (Martin, Ginns, & Papworth, 2017). Students' sense of autonomy, relatedness, competence, and perceived teacher support, are reported to contribute to student engagement as part of motivational dynamics in the classroom (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008).

1.3.3. Engagement and Interest

Interest is another term closely connected to engagement. As previously mentioned, engagement is often conceptualized in the three parts of its emotional, behavioral, or cognitive dimension. On the other hand, researchers regard interest as a cognitive or affective motivational variable (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Students with high levels of interest in a topic are often more likely to become engaged in learning activities related to that topic (Krapp, 2002). Conversely, engaging learning experiences can spark or cultivate interest in a particular subject (Güvenli, 2014). Therefore, understanding the interplay between these two constructs is crucial for promoting student success.

1.4. Engagement in EFL Context

Although research on student engagement and language learning is still rare compared to research on other constructs and student engagement, such as motivation, there has been an

increase in the number of articles and studies on engagement in language learning in recent years (Mercer, 2019). Levesque, Zuehlke, Stanek, and Ryan (2004) have suggested that students' autonomy and competence have to be encouraged to attain student engagement. Furthermore, when students feel autonomous and competent, they experience a sense of control over their learning journey, fostering a more growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). This growth mindset encourages them to view challenges as opportunities to engage deeper with the learning process. Philp and Duchesne (2016) have argued that the operationalization of engagement should be based on a theoretical framework of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), taking into consideration factors such as setting, tasks, and participants. This approach acknowledges the unique complexities of language learning and emphasizes the importance of considering several key factors such as task design and learning environment.

Sulis and Philp (2021) investigated the connection between classroom environment and engagement in foreign language learning. Their study involved two French classes, a beginner level, and an advanced level. Both classes were video and audio recorded four times throughout the academic year. Data was collected from the participants in these classes. The research revealed that tasks with inappropriate difficulty levels, either too easy or too challenging, negatively impacted student engagement, leading to feelings of disengagement. Interestingly, Sulis and Philp (2021) also found a dynamic interplay between engagement and environmental support. An anxiety-free and supportive classroom atmosphere, fostered by both teachers and classmates, contributed to increased student engagement across social, emotional, and cognitive domains.

1.5. Disengagement

Some researchers claim that engagement is on a single continuum, with engagement on the positive end and disengagement on the negative one (Azevedo, 2015). Recent research from Wang (2019) suggests that disengagement should be put on a separate continuum, as

engagement and disengagement are conceptually different (Wang et al., 2019). Introducing a dichotomy such as, engagement and disengagement can provide a clear perspective on the gathered data.

Effective learning hinges on engagement. But, it flourishes within a context of respectful interaction (Nolen, 2018). Politeness fosters trust and mutual respect among students and educators. This overlap between engagement and politeness creates a sense of psychological safety (Skaalvik & Kaufman, 2014). In essence, engagement and politeness are not separate entities, but, together, mutually reinforce successful learning.

1.6. Politeness Theories

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1.6.1. Brown and Levinson Theory

Brown & Levinson are referred to as the contemporary parents of politeness theory as a sociolinguistic concept. The sociolinguists' face theory contains three basic notions: face, face-threatening acts (FTAs), and politeness strategies. The fundamental concepts revolve

around rationality and face as general attributes. The statement entails that, individuals have two faces: one rooted in seeking for approval and acceptance from others (positive face), and the other rooted in a desire to proceed without facing obstacles or hindrances (negative face). Rationality is the lessening or logic of means & ends (Wierzbicka, 1985:145). Essentially, this quote suggests that people are possibly seen in two ways. One is when they want approval and acceptance from others (positive face); the other is when they want to go continue without facing issues (negative face).

1.6.2. Theory Elements

Brown & Levinson's theory is a multifaceted theory that explores politeness and interactions. Brown and Levinson's theory provides a set of strategies for navigating the nuances of politeness in communication. In EFL classrooms, Teachers can use these strategies to navigate the complexities of classroom interactions.

a. Face

Goffman (1976) lays the groundwork for Brown and Levinson's (1987) core definition of face. Various definitions of face concentrate on different aspects, including the social context, linguistic elements, and interpersonal dynamics. One definition is “Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interactions” (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61). In simpler terms, face is how we appear to others and can change depending on the situation and the nature of the relationship and how we engage with others. In addition, individuals have the desire to be seen in a certain way by certain people.

The concept of “face” consists of two interconnected aspects; Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish these two elements as negative face and positive face. They defined positive face as 'the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.' To

add, a negative face is 'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.' (Brown & Levinson, 1987:62)

b. Face-Threatening Act

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory thoroughly explores face-threatening acts. They define the latter as “those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker. By ‘act’ we have in mind what is intended to be done by verbal or non-verbal communication (p: 65).” To explain, such actions that threaten the person’s face can either target our positive or negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) provide several examples of communication acts that can be threatening. They highlight complaints and insults or threats and warnings. Also, these primarily threaten the addressee's positive face.

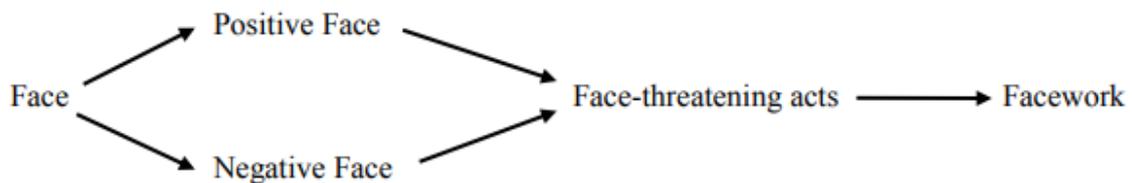


Figure 1.2. Visualization of Face Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 63)

Brown and Levinson's (1987) Face Theory, as depicted in the figure, revolves around the concept of "face," which represents our desire to maintain a positive social image (positive face) and freedom from imposition (negative face) during communication. Positive Face reflects our craving for approval and respect, while "Negative Face" signifies our desire for autonomy and freedom from pressure. Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) symbolize verbal or non-verbal actions that can potentially damage either the speaker's or listener’s positive or negative face. In essence, the figure provides a visual representation of how Face Theory operates in communication.

1.6.3. Geoffrey Leech Theory (1980)

Geoffrey Leech (1980) offers a distinct perspective on politeness. Leech's (1980) definition of politeness, grounded in his analysis of illocutionary acts, can be coined as "a speech act or, more precisely, an act that predicts something" (1983:104-5). In his comprehensive categorization of these illocutionary acts, Leech (1983) identifies four distinct types:

a. Competitive Type

The Illocutionary Goal competes with the social goal. The speaker seeks dominance through actions. In other words, achieving the intended outcome of communication can sometimes conflict with maintaining positive social interaction. This tension is particularly evident when speakers aim to project dominance. For example, ordering, asking, demanding, and begging.

b. Convivial Type

The Illocutionary Goal coincides with the social goal. Promoting cooperation and positive relations. In other words, achieving the intended outcome of communication aligns with maintaining positive social interaction. This is particularly evident when speakers aim to foster cooperation and positive relations. Examples include offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, and congratulating.

c. Collaborative Type

The Illocutionary Goal is indifferent to the social goal. The speaker emphasizes the communication of information instead of focusing on the social dynamic. In other words, achieving the intended outcome depends on maintaining a specific social interaction. This is evident when speakers aim to deliver factual information or instructions. Examples include asserting, reporting, announcing, and instructing.

d. Conflictive Type

It is the Illocutionary goal that conflicts with the social goal. The speaker aims to assert authority threatening social harmony. For example, threatening, accusing, cursing, and reprimanding.

1.6.4. Paul Grice's Maxims

Grice (1975) also has introduced politeness Maxims that extend to a set of guiding principles. These maxims offer a nuanced framework for understanding. He (1975) has provided valuable insights into effective communication.

- The tact maxim (found in directives and commissives): the speaker minimizes cost and maximizes the benefit to the hearer.
- In the generosity maxim (found in directive and commissives) the speaker minimizes the benefit to self and maximizes the cost to self.
- The approbation/ Praise maxim is oriented toward the hearer' (found in expressive and assertive): the speaker minimizes dispraise of the hearer and maximizes praise of the hearer.
- The modesty maxim (found in expressive and assertive): the speaker minimizes the praise of self and maximizes the dispraise of self.
- The agreement maxim (found in assertive): The speaker minimizes disagreement with the hearer and maximizes agreement with the hearer.
- The sympathy maxim (found in assertive): the speaker minimizes antipathy towards the hearer and maximizes sympathy towards the hearer.

- Consideration maxim (found in assertive): the speaker minimizes the hearer's discomfort/ displeasure and maximizes the hearer's comfort/ pleasure.

1.7. Brown and Levinson's Politeness in EFL Classroom

Returning to the initial theory, Brown and Levinson's pragmatic contribution extends to the realm of EFL classrooms. They propose four politeness strategies bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record to navigate face-threatening acts in communication. They (1987) displayed that the majority of speech acts are a face threat, however employing politeness strategies helps in the mitigation of the threat of others' faces.

1.7.1. Bald-on-Record

Brown and Levinson (1987) have claimed that the main reason for using such strategy is:

“There is a basic assumption in talk that there is underlying method in the madness. The prime reason for bald-on-record usage may be stated simply: in general, whenever S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy H's face, even to any degree, he will choose the J bald-on-record strategy. There are, however, different kinds of bald-on record usage in different circumstances, because S can have different motives for his want to do the FTA with maximum efficiency” (p:95)

Therefore, within EFL classrooms, teachers can emphasize the importance of context-dependent bald-on-record usage. Learners need to learn about different communication styles because it helps them enhance their communicative competence in different situations in English.

1.7.2. Positive Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987) have defined positive politeness as communicating in a way that supports the listener's wish for their needs or actions to be seen as positive and.(p:101).

Brown and Levinson (1987) have defined positive politeness as communicating in a way that supports the listener's wish for their needs or actions to be seen as positive (p: 101). Focusing

on the listener's positive self-image, positive politeness aims to make the listener feel good about them (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This communication style goes beyond just avoiding negativity. It actively builds rapport and fosters a sense of connection with the listener.

1.7.3. Negative Politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness (NP) involves actions directed toward respecting the listener's need for freedom and not being disturbed or hindered. Negative politeness emphasizes respecting the listener's right to make their own choices and avoid being pressured (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Negative politeness often uses hedging language to soften the force of requests (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These politeness strategies are useful when making requests. By minimizing imposition, **NP** helps maintain a sense of respect for the listener's boundaries.

1.7.4. Off- Record

Fattah (2010: 137) formulates it learning a foreign language involves not only knowing how to speak and write but also how to behave linguistically. Therefore, the speaker and users of the language must be equipped with politeness states in speaking and must be aware of how to use politeness in different communicative acts in their daily lives. This means that learners of a foreign language must not learn only how to speak and write a language but also know how to use its linguistics rules.

Lakoff (1990:34) emphasizes that “politeness is understood in terms of conflict avoidance”. In other words, politeness helps people to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. Watts (2002:2) adds that “being polite is crucial to successful communication with others”

1.8. The Effectiveness of Politeness Strategies on EFL Environment

Jiang (2010:5) stresses the importance of politeness in pedagogy; He says “In the context of language teaching, it is believed to enhance learning by providing a lively and friendly atmosphere in the classroom” This means that politeness helps students to have positive feelings toward the lessons and motivates them to participate more in their classes.

Politeness strategies assist teachers in preserving a positive relationship with students and mitigating threats to each other's face. Employing various politeness strategies during interactions with students ensures that students feel at ease and safe, thus facilitating their learning.

Brown and Levinson (1987:69) claim that “Politeness strategies are therefore employed to recompense the conflicting goals”. In line with this, Hill et al. (1983:349) highlighted “Politeness is one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider other’s feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport”

1.9. Previous Studies

Conzen's (2018) qualitative study, titled "Teacher-student Relationships, Classroom climate, and Student engagement in EFL Classrooms," delves into the nuanced and vital role of interpersonal dynamics in fostering engagement within EFL classrooms. Using a multi-case study approach and in-depth interviews with teachers and students, Conzen (2018) highlights how positive teacher-student relationships and a supportive classroom climate can significantly impact learners' engagement and participation.

The study unveils that constructive interactions marked by mutual respect, and transparent communication cultivated a feeling of belonging and security among students. This atmosphere prompted them to take risks and engage actively in their learning process. However, Instructional relationships that contained power imbalances, negativity, and a lack

of trust stifled engagement and discouraged students from expressing themselves. Therefore, the study entails that a welcoming and encouraging classroom environment, where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning and diverse perspectives are valued is proposed to promote engagement. Furthermore, Prioritizing time and effort to build genuine connections with students, both individually and as a class, is crucial for fostering engagement.

Ushioda's (2013) qualitative research added another layer of the contagious energy of teacher enthusiasm and passion, creating a welcoming and supportive space for learning to flourish. Ushioda's (2013) research titled "Teacher Enthusiasm and Language Learner Engagement: A Case Study in Japanese EFL Classrooms" investigates the role of teacher enthusiasm in igniting engagement within EFL classrooms. The study reveals that teacher enthusiasm, characterized by excitement, passion, and genuine interest in the subject, can create a dynamic and stimulating learning environment, where students are engaged and participate actively.

In an effort to link engagement and politeness, Jiang's (2010) Quantitative study titled, "The Significance of politeness strategies in foreign language classroom interaction" emphasizes the power of teacher politeness in shaping classroom dynamics and student engagement. Through applying politeness strategies, teachers can create a more positive and inviting atmosphere, encouraging students to take risks, participate actively, and enjoy the learning process. The study highlights the fact that Students perceived teachers who used more politeness strategies as more approachable and supportive.

Conclusion

Having explored the complex interplay between language learning, social interaction, and student engagement in EFL classrooms, this review sheds light on the pivotal role of politeness strategies. EFL teachers can utilize Brown and Levinson's framework to tailor

communication with positive and negative politeness, minimizing face threats and fostering a sense of belonging. Engagement is discussed and its dimensions from behavioral to cognitive, and emotional and distinguishing it from related concepts like motivation, we've gained a nuanced understanding of its intricate relationship with politeness in this unique context.

Chapter Two

3.3. Introduction

The following chapter delves into the methodological framework used in this study, providing a comprehensive overview of the research design adopted for the investigation. In addition, the data collection methods utilized for gathering both quantitative and qualitative data are explained. Finally, the chapter describes the instruments developed to collect each type of data. These instruments are the questionnaire for the student sample, the interview guide for the teacher sample, and the observation guide for documenting observational data. Furthermore, the chapter explores the target population and the sampling method. Demographic Information about student and teacher samples is also explored. The chapter elaborates on the methods utilized for analyzing the collected qualitative and quantitative data. Finally, ethical considerations integrated throughout the research process are addressed, underscoring the commitment to conducting a responsible and ethically sound study.

3.4. Research Design

Examining the impact of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory on learner engagement necessitates the adoption of mixed methods research design. This design incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The mixed method design demands the use of data collection instruments, which consists of student questionnaires, teacher interviews and participant class observation. Implementing a multifaceted distinct research approach ensures the collection of reliable data, the validity and credibility of the findings and providing both in-depth insights and statistical generalization.

Research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. Trochim and Land (1982) claimed that a design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project. Johnson et al. (2007), defined mixed methods research as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, for the purposes of breadth and depth of

understanding and corroboration.”(P: 123). Therefore, the selection of the mixed method approach is suitable to this research. The qualitative design can be defined as the procedure with systematic empirical examination into particular meaning (Shank, 2002:5). On the other hand, Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 51).

3.5. Data Collection Methods

This research utilized a multi-method approach to data collection, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The specific methods employed will be comprehensively explained in the following subsequent sections.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Collection

In order to assess student engagement in EFL students through the use of Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies, the approach of a self-report questionnaire was chosen and administered to the second year university student population sample. Additionally, Sound questionnaire construction is a highly developed art form within the practice of scientific inquiry (Rea & Parker, 2014:36).

3.5.1.1. Semi-Structured Questionnaire Development

Apart from the three separate scales that this study incorporates, the questionnaire has been distributed to 60 second year EFL learners at the University of Moulay Tahar. This questionnaire serves as the student voice in the research. It consists of two sections; it gathers personal demographic information. The self report questionnaire assesses participants' engagement levels through Likert-scale and grid questions. It provides both quantitative and qualitative insights into classroom participation, engagement levels, and teacher communication.

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Collection

To gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and classroom interactions on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in the EFL classroom, a qualitative data collection method is employed. This section provides details on the use of qualitative instruments, which Semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Semi-structured interviews are the ideal instrument to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of teachers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasize the importance of teacher voice research, arguing that understanding and elevating educators' perspectives is crucial for improving educational practice and policy (p:505).

While semi-structured interviews are chosen for their flexibility, they also provide a balance between structured guidance and the freedom to delve deeper into participants' responses, enhancing the quality of the data gathered. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) Further explain semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool "Interviews can be one-on-one, in small groups, or through focus groups and range from highly structured, where specific questions and the order in which they are asked are determined ahead of time, to unstructured" (p:14)

According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016:14) "Observation is the best technique when an activity, event, or situation can be observed firsthand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the phenomenon under study." In fact, social science research, particularly in the EFL context, offers a valuable way to gather data concerning learners' interaction and behaviors. The research demands the employment of participant observation. Kawulich (2012) defines the observer as a participant as "who participates in the social setting under study, but is not a group member. Group members are aware of the purpose of the research and are more likely to be open with a researcher who is not a member of their group." (P: 3).

a. Semi-Structured Interview Guide Development

During the data collection process seven (07) EFL teachers at the department of English, Moulay Tahar university of Saida are interviewed. The semi-structured interview began with gathering background information (age, gender, education, experience). The EFL practitioners are interviewed about their teaching approach and how they measure student engagement. The core of the interview focuses on politeness strategies. Finally, the teachers are asked to share real-life examples of how these strategies have boosted engagement and discuss any situations where politeness might have hindered participation.

b. Semi-Structured Observation Guide Development

The observation focuses on two key areas: politeness application and perceived student engagement. Initially, the politeness strategies section focuses on various strategies a teacher use during instruction, such as using humor, offering compliments, or employing indirect requests. For each strategy, there is a section to describe the observed behavior, and assess its effectiveness in engaging students. Additionally, the student engagement section delves into different aspects of participation. A section to record the number of students actively responding to instructions and asking questions is added as well. A Comment section is added to provide further context, insights and remarks.

Differences between the two approaches are summarized in the table below:

Point of comparison	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Focus of research	Quality (nature, essence)	Quantity (how many, how much)
Philosophical roots	Phenomenology, Symbolic interactionism, constructivism	Empiricism, logical positivism
Associated phrases	Fieldwork, ethnographic, naturalistic, grounded , subjective	Experimental , empirical , statistical
Goal of investigation	Understanding, description, discovery , hypothesis generating	Prediction, control , confirmation ,hypothesis testing
Design characteristics	Flexible, evolving, emergent	Pre-determined structure
Setting	Natural , familiar	Unfamiliar , artificial
Sample	Small, non random, theoretical	Large, random representative
Data collection	Researcher as primary instrument, interviews, observations	Inanimate instruments (scales, tests, Survey, questionnaires)

Mode of analysis	Inductive (by researcher)	Deductive (by statistical methods)
Findings	Comprehensive , holistic, expansive	Precise, narrow, reductionistic.

Table 2.1. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches Adapted from Merriam (2009).

3.6. Population and Sampling

According to Acharya et al. (2013), investigating the entire population in research is suitable, but practical limitations often prevent this. Consequently, researchers rely on studying a representative sample that is large enough to accurately reflect the characteristics of the entire population (p: 330). To add, Rea and Parker (2014) argue probability sampling “allows the investigator to generalize results of the study from the sample to the population from which it was drawn (p: 77). This means that by using probability sampling techniques, researchers can be more confident that their findings from a smaller group (the sample) can be applied to a larger group (the population) as a whole.

By random sampling, the current research population is the Second year students and teachers at the Department of English, University of Moulay Tahar, Saida. The sample size for this study is seventy five (75) consisting of sixty five (65) students and seven (07) teachers. Focusing on second-year students allows for a targeted exploration of politeness strategies' impact on their engagement at a critical stage of their language development.

3.6.1. Students’ Profile

This research involves sixty five (65) second-year student participants ranging in age from 17 to 31 years old, split into forty two (42) females and twenty three (23) males. The participants had varied educational backgrounds. Throughout the study, participants demonstrated an interest in their education and actively engaged in their lessons.

3.6.2. Teachers’ Profile

The teachers involved in this study are experienced instructors of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Department of English, University of Moulay Tahar, Saida. Seven (07) teachers participated in the study. They represent diverse specialty fields, teaching experience, and instructional methods. The teachers hold advanced degrees in English language teaching, with several years of teaching experience in both academic and non-academic settings.

Pedagogical approaches among them vary, reflecting a range of teaching philosophies and methodologies.

Teacher	Age	Subject	Level taught
A	29	Oral expression	2nd year
B	40	Linguistics	2nd year
C	29	Literature	2nd year
D	30	Literature	2nd year
E	46	Oral expression	2nd year
F	49	Translation	2nd year
G	28	Phonetics	2nd year

Table 2.2. Teachers' Profile

To conclude, this section have addressed the research design and methods used to achieve the current study's goal. Three research tools were used including teachers' interview and learners' questionnaire and in class participant observation in order to gather data about the impact of politeness strategies second year students' engagement levels.

3.7. Data Analysis Methods

Merriam (2009) defines data analysis as, "Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data, and making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read it is the process of making meaning." (P: 175-176). Furthermore, Hinton (2004) emphasizes the importance of data analysis. He (2004) explains that describing large amounts of data or analyzing different sets of data with the help of statistical calculations would aid researchers in finding answers. Therefore, statistical analysis is not be seen as mysterious or obscure but represent a necessary tool that assists the researchers in their search (p:2). In the present study, the process of data analysis includes thematic analysis for the qualitative data, where it is aimed to gain a deeper understanding of prominent themes that emerge from the data. Also, a statistical analysis for quantitative data aimed to test hypotheses and quantify trends.

2.5.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

Merriam (2009) suggests that, "the much-preferred way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection." For the sake of requirements, when

carrying out data analysis, the researcher becomes the tool for analysis, making judgments about coding, identifying themes, decontextualizing and recontextualizing the data. (Starks & Trinidad, 2007)

A thematic analytical approach is selected for this research, respectively. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that researchers use to systematically organize and analyze complex data sets. (King, 2004). A rigorous thematic analysis approach can produce insightful and trustworthy findings (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis demonstrates theoretical flexibility when identifying, describing, and interpreting detailed patterns in a data. Attride-Stirling (2001) defines thematic network process as “the process of deriving themes from textual data and illustrating these with some representational tool is well established in qualitative research.”(P: 387). It suggests that this method is not only well-defined but also a common tool for researchers working with textual data.



Figure 2.1. Structure of a Thematic Network (Source: Attride-Stirling, 2001)

2.5.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most important element in any research. Babi (2013) claims that “Scientific research often involves collecting large masses of data.” (P: 460). Therefore, she (2013) suggests that “descriptive statistics present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form” (p: 460). Consequently, the current study describes the measurement of the quantitative data that have been collected based on statistics. It interprets the analysis while performing

validation of the results. The numerical data on the questionnaire were encoded by the researcher onto the Microsoft Excel program then transformed into tables and figures for the understanding of the results and a more systematic reliable conclusion.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), “survey research is inherently intrusive” and the obtained data could be easily abused (p: 79). To ensure ethical conduct, the research strictly follows all fundamental ethical principles. Respectively, this research abides by the five core principles that guide ethical research practices that Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) suggested in their work. The first guarantees that participation in this research will not cause any harm to participants, and this principle supersedes all others during data collection. Respect for autonomy further emphasizes the privacy rights of participants. They will not be pressured to participate and can choose to refuse answering questions without explanation. Researchers will uphold all promises regarding how participant data will be handled. This includes being realistic about the level of confidentiality that can be maintained (p: 79-80). These principles ensure compliance with ethical standards, responsible data collection and the safety of both the researchers and participants.

In efforts to abide by the previously stated principles, the following measures were taken. The first (1), second (2) fifth (5) principles, all data collected is gathered anonymously and only managed by the researcher, hence teachers unable to examine the data for their students’ participation sheets. Additionally, the author handed and received the questionnaires in the classrooms to validate that no teacher accessed the answer sheets. To comply with the third (3) ethical principle, the data collection tools were designed to inform participants about the general nature of the data being collected, therefore the participants were provided a purpose and background information about the research. Consequently, all the ethical guidelines of data collection by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) are followed.

2.7. Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has provided a detailed overview of the approaches, methods, and tools employed in this research. The selection of data collection tools, such as the questionnaire for quantitative data, interview guide for qualitative data, and observation protocol for gathering insightful observational information, was meticulous. Moreover, a diverse and suitable sample of participants, including both students and teachers, is included. Furthermore, applying a combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis strategies

extracts valuable insights from the current research throughout the entire process. Ethical considerations are prioritized to ensure the well-being of the sample and the researchers involved. To conclude this chapter, the strength of the mentioned methodological framework will guide us through the next phases of this research with purpose and rigor.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two

3.1. Introduction

Positive politeness strategies and FTAs are tools that assist teachers in fostering engagement and participation in their classrooms. To reach answers to the proposed research questions, Data are collected through the students' questionnaires, teachers' interview, and classroom observation. This chapter delves into a detailed analysis, discussion and interpretation of these findings. By critically analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, this chapter aims to discuss and interpret the relationship between teacher politeness strategies and student participation, interaction, and overall engagement in EFL classrooms.

3.2. Analysis of the Findings

The following data analysis section explores the information gathered through the research methods outlined earlier. This analysis will employ various techniques to identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data.

3.3. Quantitative Findings

This section provides the results of the data collected from the students' questionnaire. The findings reflect the responses of sixty five (65) students to seven (7) semi-structured questions.

3.3.1. The Students' Questionnaire Findings

This section deals with the findings collected from the semi-structured student questionnaires administered during the data collection phase.

A. Personal Information

The first section presents the personal information concerning gender and age. Hammer (2011) suggests that at a minimum, research should report participant demographics including age, gender and other variables. However, depending on the

specific research questions and populations studied, additional demographic information may also be pertinent.

a. Gender

Table following represents gender distribution in the present case study

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Number	23	42	65
Percentage	35.4%	64.6%	100%

Table3.1. The Respondents’ Gender

The results indicate a varied gender distribution in the sample, with females comprising 64.6% and males 35.4% of participants. This aligns with our research objective of recruiting participants from both genders to explore potential gender variations in politeness strategies and their impact on learner engagement.

b. Age

Age is a key demographic factor that can influence experiences, knowledge, and behavior.

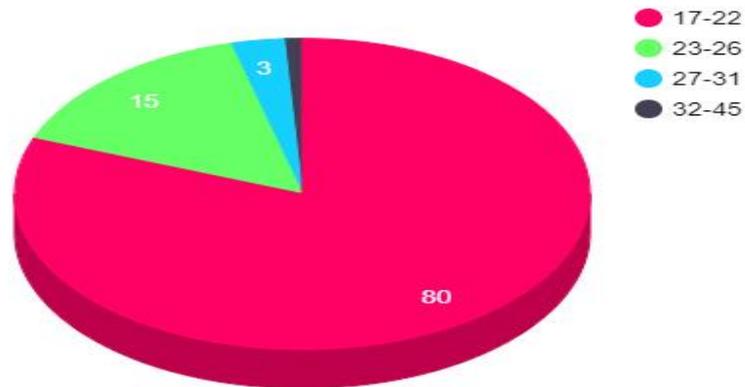


Figure 3.1. The respondents’ age.

The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 17-22 years old, comprising the largest proportion at 80%. Following this, 15.4% of participants are aged between 23-26 years. While 3.1% are aged between 27-31 years, and the rest 1.5% fall within the 32-45 age

brackets. This distribution of ages highlights the importance of considering the demographic composition of the sample.

B. Learners Engagement

Question 1: To What extent do you agree with the following statements?

Statement One “I actively participate in class discussions.”

Agreement level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree	Total
Student number	20	26	13	4	2	65

Table 3.2. Distribution of Student Agreement to Statement One (01)

Students vary in their level of agreement with the statement “I actively participate in class discussions.” The table above reveals a various distribution across all levels of agreement, with a significant portion of twenty six (26) students that agree. Thus, these findings highlight the potential need for strategies that can encourage broader participation in class discussions. As the data show, Students who perceive a positive and supportive classroom environment are more likely to actively participate in discussions. Therefore, the different politeness strategies can lead to enhancing students’ engagement in the classroom by creating a relaxing environment. This is further supported in a study carried by Jiang (2010) where it is found that “politeness enhances teaching, benefits the students, and contributes to the effective interaction and friendly, lively atmosphere in an EFL classroom”

Statement One “When the teacher uses humor, I feel more motivated to learn and participate actively”.

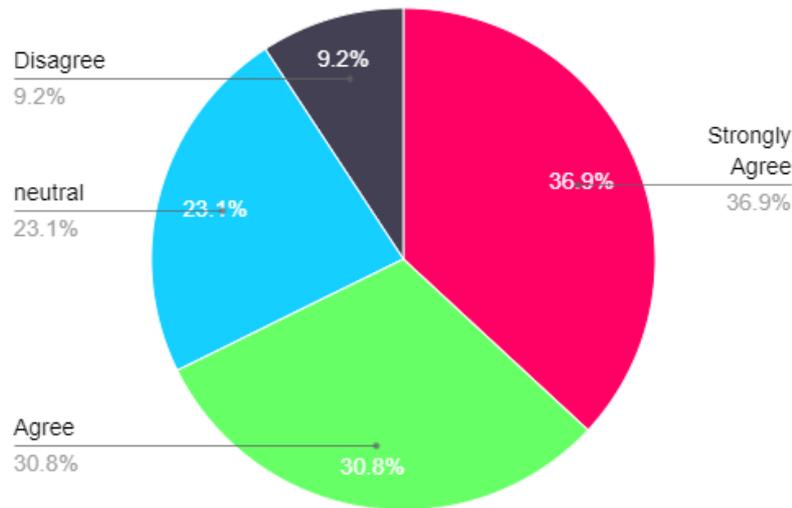


Figure 3.2. Distribution of Student Agreement to statement two (2)

Students vary in their level of agreement with the statement “When the teacher uses humor, I feel more motivated to learn and participate actively” The graph above reveals a varied distribution across all levels of agreement, with a significant portion of Thirty six (36) students that strongly agree. Humor can be a valuable tool to promote a positive and engaging learning environment in the classroom, as evidenced by a significant portion of students who strongly agree with its motivational effect. This is supported by Akbari (2020) where that a majority of students favored the use of humor in EFL classrooms. This preference stemmed from their belief that humor fosters a more positive learning environment, leading to increased student engagement.

Statement Two “I feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes in my EFL class”.

Agreement level	Strongly Agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree	Total
Student number	17	22	12	10	4	65

Table 3.3 Distribution of Student Agreement to Statement Three (3)

The responses to the statement “I feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes in my EFL class”. The data reveal a diverse range of responses. A notable group of 22 students

agreed with the statement and seventeen (17) strongly agreed. These findings highlight the potential benefits of the creation of a safe and supportive classroom environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. However, the presence of students who might not feel entirely comfortable taking risks underscores the need for ongoing efforts to create a fully supportive and inclusive learning environment for all. By employing positive politeness strategies like offering encouragement, using inclusive language and teachers can cultivate a safe environment where students feel comfortable taking risks, making mistakes, and actively engage in their learning.

Statement Three "The use of positive comments and compliments by the teacher makes me feel valued and more engaged in classroom activities"

Agreement level	Strongly Agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree	Total
Student number	35	18	7	4	1	65

Table 3.4. Distribution of Student Agreement to Four (4)

The feedback regarding the statement "The use of positive comments and compliments by the teacher makes me feel valued and more engaged in classroom activities" demonstrates a range of responses. These findings highlight the potential effectiveness of incorporating polite and how positive comments can cultivate a more engaging learning environment. Politeness theory itself supports the notion that positive politeness strategies can contribute to student engagement. Students who receive regular positive comments and compliments from teachers are more likely to report feeling valued and engaged in class. The latter claim is supported by Khusnia's (2017) work that demonstrates that teachers who utilize positive language, express appreciation, and offer encouragement create a more positive and respectful learning environment.

Statement Four "Invitations to share personal experiences create a welcoming atmosphere and encourage me to participate in discussions"

Agreement level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	strongly disagree	Total
Student	30	17	11	6	1	65

number						
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Table 3.5. Distribution of Student Agreement to statement five (5)

The responses to the statement "Invitations to share personal experiences create a welcoming atmosphere and encourage me to participate in discussions" depict a diverse range of perspectives. Specifically, 17 students agreed with the statement, while 30 strongly agreed. These findings highlight the potential effectiveness of incorporating a sense of connection within the classroom through respectful interactions it also can contribute to a more positive and engaging learning experience for all students. When students feel safe and respected, they are more likely to feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and experiences. Teachers can create this safe space by modeling respectful communication.

Question Two: How engaged do you typically feel in your EFL classes?

Level of engagement	Somewhat engaged	Moderately engaged	Very engaged	Extremely engaged	Total
Number	21	18	24	2	65
Percentage %	32.3%	27.7%	36.9%	3.1%	100.0%

Table 3.6. The Students' Engagement Level

The distribution of engagement levels among participants reveals notable trends. The majority of participants are categorized as very engaged and moderately engaged, representing proportions of 36.9% and 27.7%. Overall, the data suggest that While the majority of students are actively engaged, there is still a portion who exhibit lower levels of engagement This suggests the necessity of a positive relationship between the use of politeness strategies and student engagement.

C. Teaching Strategies and Classroom Interaction

Teaching Strategies	Number	Percentage
Humor and jokes	31	47.7%
Open-ended questions and invitations to share opinions	45	69.2%
Positive feedback and compliments	47	72.3%
Indirect requests and suggestions	19	29.2%
Avoiding direct criticism and offering	29	44.6%

alternatives in feedback		
Formal language and respect for hierarchy	23	35.4%

Table 3.7. Distribution of Student Preferences for Teaching Strategies

It appears that creating a truly engaging classroom environment requires a multifaceted approach that caters to diverse student preferences and learning styles. This is evident from the data above that explicitly shows a clear preference for positive and interactive strategies. "Positive feedback and compliments", followed by "Open-ended questions and invitations to share opinions" and "Humor and jokes" are most favored by learners. These strategies likely resonate with students because they feel valued and welcomed. Conversely, the remaining strategies, namely "Avoiding direct criticism and offering alternatives in feedback", "Indirect requests and suggestions," and "Formal language and respect for hierarchy," are least favored. The findings highlight the importance of considering a broader range beyond PS. These findings underscore the importance of considering diverse teaching strategies that resonate with students' preferences to effectively foster engagement in the classroom.

3.4. Qualitative Findings

This section presents the qualitative data obtained through two primary data collection methods, semi-structured teachers interviews and in-class participant observations. The semi-structured interviews are purely qualitative tools employing open-ended questions, allowing for in-depth exploration of the selected seven (7) teachers' insights and experiences. To complement these teacher insights, in-class participant observation data are collected over five-weeks across various second-years EFL courses, such as "Oral Expression" and "Literature." This observational method aims to capture the dynamics of classroom interactions and teaching practices related to the research questions.

3.4.1. The Teacher Interview Findings

After grouping and coding interviewee responses by theme, these codes were then translated back into written explanations, providing the detailed descriptions presented below.

A. Politeness Strategies

Teacher responses regarding their familiarity with politeness strategies reveal a spectrum of awareness. Four teachers explicitly acknowledge a conscious understanding of politeness strategies and their importance in teaching. By consciously employing these strategies, they aim to foster a respectful and supportive classroom atmosphere. Two teachers offer a different perspective, suggesting a more implicit understanding of politeness strategies. While they might not use specific terminology, their approaches highlight practices that align with positive politeness. The findings suggest that regardless of whether teachers have an explicit or implicit understanding of politeness strategies, they recognize the value these strategies bring to the educational process. This highlights the need to incorporate training on politeness strategies into teacher professional development programs. Taguchi (2011) supports this need, emphasizing the growing recognition of the importance of teaching pragmatics, including politeness strategies, and calling for systematic incorporation of pragmatic training in teacher development programs to enhance communicative abilities in educational settings.

Question Two To what extent do you consciously use humor, jokes, and open-ended questions in your instructions?

Teacher responses regarding their use of humor, jokes, and open-ended questions in instruction showcase a focus on creating an engaging and stimulating learning environment. Five (5) teachers highlight the benefits of these strategies. They use humor and jokes to create a relaxed atmosphere and open-ended questions to encourage participation. Students who feel comfortable and included are more likely to actively participate and engage with the learning process. One teacher's perspective highlights that these strategies might be influenced by contextual factors such as student level, topic complexity, and teacher familiarity with the students. These findings underscore the potential of humor, jokes, and open-ended questions in promoting student engagement in EFL classrooms. This suggests a nuanced understanding of how politeness strategies can be most effective in different situations. This perspective

aligns with Ishihara and Cohen's (2010) insight on teaching and learning pragmatics, where they emphasize the importance of cultural factors in influencing the effectiveness of politeness strategies in various EFL contexts.

Question Three How do you use positive feedback and terms of endearment to create a comfortable and motivating environment?

Teacher responses regarding the use of positive feedback and terms of endearment to create a comfortable environment showcase a range of approaches. Four teachers highlighted the importance of positive reinforcement strategies. These include acknowledging progress, offering specific praise, and personalizing feedback. By feeling valued and supported, students are likely to engage with the learning process. However, they emphasized the importance of clear boundaries. Overall, effective teachers appear to navigate a balance between politeness strategies and other classroom management techniques.

Question Four In your opinion, how do these positive politeness strategies impact student participation and confidence?

The teacher responses regarding the impact of positive politeness strategies on student participation and confidence highlight the power of creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment. Five teachers expressed that using positive politeness strategies leads to increased student engagement and participation. However, one teacher has commented on the importance of balance. Overly forceful positive reinforcement could inadvertently lead to feelings of intimidation. This suggests that teachers need to be mindful of maintaining a balanced use of politeness strategies to avoid unintended consequences.

B. Negative Politeness

While positive politeness dominates EFL discussions, negative politeness strategies (NPS) are just as essential for engaging classroom interactions. Examining these strategies, like using

hedges or indirect requests, can illuminate how learners navigate communication and offer alternative perspectives. This exploration expands the understanding of NPS in EFL

Question One When might you use formal address or apologies in your instructions?

Teacher responses regarding the use of formal address and apologies in instruction highlight the importance of maintaining a professional and respectful learning environment. All teachers have emphasized the need for clear boundaries and a professional demeanor. Formal language is seen as a tool for establishing expectations and fostering respect between teachers and students. Two respondents appear to navigate a balance between politeness strategies and other classroom management techniques. Overall, All teachers have mentioned the importance of maintaining a professional and respectful learning environment. Formal language is seen as a tool for establishing expectations and fostering respect between teachers and students.

Question Two “Do you find face-saving strategies like offering alternatives or avoiding direct criticism helpful in promoting engagement?”

Teacher responses regarding the use of face-saving strategies (FSS) in promoting engagement highlight the value of positive framing and feedback. Five (5) teachers expressed that offering alternatives, reframing mistakes, or using positive reinforcement can contribute to a more engaging learning environment. However, one teacher has highlighted the importance of balancing positive framing with direct feedback delivered respectfully. This suggests that effective teachers utilize a combination of positive framing and constructive criticism to promote engagement and learning. This is essential for fostering student engagement and ultimately, language learning success. This perspective is supported by Hattie and Timperley's (2007) analysis, which emphasizes the significance of feedback in student learning outcomes. Their (2007) study underscores the importance of providing both positive reinforcement and constructive criticism to guide students towards engagement.

Question Three Can you share specific examples of times when you used politeness strategies to boost student engagement in your class?

Teacher responses regarding specific examples of using politeness strategies to boost engagement showcase a variety of techniques for creating a positive learning environment. Several teachers highlighted the importance of respectful feedback. One teacher prioritizes constructive feedback that focuses on improvement rather than simply pointing out errors. Another emphasizes fostering open communication to create a supportive atmosphere. These approaches suggest that politeness strategies can be used to create a safe space for students to learn from mistakes and be engaged. Beyond feedback, engaging activities emerged as another key strategy. One teacher uses humor to help students relax when tackling difficult topics, while another utilizes role-plays to encourage critical thinking. Another teacher have focused on creating a comfortable and supportive environment.

Question Four In your experience, have you encountered where certain politeness strategies hindered engagement?

Teacher responses regarding drawbacks showcase the complexities involved in employing politeness strategies. Four out of six teachers acknowledged situations where politeness might hinder engagement or critical thinking. Teachers expressed concern that an overemphasis on politeness could create a classroom culture where students are hesitant to participate for fear of being impolite. Additionally, overly polite feedback could be misinterpreted, and shyness can still hinder participation even with open invitations. These points highlight that teachers might need to adjust their politeness level based on the situation and student needs. Another potential drawback emerged from one teacher's focus on efficiency and clarity. Teachers acknowledged that excessive politeness can sometimes hinder critical thinking and open discussion. The findings suggest that effective teachers navigate a balance between politeness and other pedagogical strategies. This aligns with Ide's (1989) discussion on the potential

drawbacks of excessive formality in communication. Ide(1989) suggests that while formal forms can convey respect, their overuse can create barriers to genuine communication. Therefore, an overemphasis on politeness may inhibit student engagement

3.4.2. Description of The Observation Grid

The in-class participant observation grid builds on the teacher perspectives gleaned from the interviews and provides a tool to directly observe classroom interactions. The grid outlines various politeness strategies teachers might employ. The grid also includes sections to record student engagement through verbal participation, nonverbal engagement, and emotional engagement.

3.4.3. The Observation Grid Findings

In order to complement the interview data and gain a deeper understanding of the employment of politeness strategies, classroom observation tool is conducted using a standardized observation grid. This in-class participant observation is conducted throughout the course of four (4) weeks. During the observation the teachers have employed a variety of politeness strategies, including the use of humor and encouraging students' participation through strategies like seeking further elaboration. Additionally, the teacher utilized positive reinforcement by verbally complimenting answers and rewarding good questions. However, the perceived effectiveness rating for humor suggests it may not be well-received.

The teacher use negative politeness strategies, which have consisted of hedging, indirectness, bald-on record, off-record and apologizing to create a supportive and encouraging environment. Indirect requests and follow-up questions are utilized moderately. Examining the observation notes will reveal if these requests were clear successful task completion. Additionally, the teacher used hedging phrases like "Thank you" and "Could you" to soften requests, suggesting a polite approach. The observation revealed a high level of

student engagement. This is evidenced by active student participation with continuous contributions.

During the observation the teachers frequently use humor and smiles to create a relaxed atmosphere. However, it may not be well-received by all students. Additionally, the teacher interacts with students and seeks participation. Analyzing observation notes reveal the previously mentioned politeness strategies are moderately effective at drawing out student participation and engagement. Notably, the observation sheet suggests a lack of positive reinforcement through compliments or celebrating successes, which could potentially contribute to lower engagement and overall student enthusiasm.

The observation sheet indicates that throughout the observed courses, the teacher relies heavily on directness in instructions with no use of indirect requests, softening phrases, or alternative solutions. Further analysis of the observation notes reveals perceived low engagement levels which can be attributed to discouraged student participation or perceived lack of approachability. The observation data reveals Nonverbal engagement is indicated by eye contact. Further analysis of the notes can reveal if the eye contact feels encouraging to students.

While the teacher attempts to create a relaxing atmosphere with humor, the observation data suggests a potential disconnect between the instructor's use of politeness strategies and the observed level of student engagement. Additionally, the lack of positive reinforcement strategies might contribute to lower student participation and motivation. Furthermore, the teacher's reliance on direct instructions, while somewhat effective, could be hindering student participation.

3.5. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

The discussion focuses on some of the core research findings obtained from the student questionnaire, Teacher interview and classroom observation. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of politeness strategies used by teachers on the engagement levels of second-year EFL learners in university classrooms. Based on the findings, the researcher presents to following answers to the research questions:

The initial research question guiding this research is: What is the role of speech politeness in promoting engagement in second-year EFL classrooms? The hypothesis suggests that speech politeness promotes engagement by creating a more positive and respectful learning environment. Consequently this study aims to evaluate the impact of speech politeness on student engagement.

The findings and analysis suggests a positive correlation between the use of politeness strategies by teachers and increased student engagement. Teachers, who integrated politeness strategies, whether consciously or unconsciously, were perceived to create a more engaging learning environment. Instructors who regularly employed these strategies had a higher reported level of engagement.

Positive politeness strategies, such as compliments and open-ended questions, were found to be particularly effective in building engaging interactions with students. Interestingly, all teachers emphasized the use of politeness strategies for fostering a higher level of student engagement in classrooms. They reported that strategies must be used with attention to additional factors around classroom dynamics

The findings support the hypothesis that speech politeness promotes engagement in second-year EFL classrooms. Teachers can enhance student engagement by integrating various

politeness strategies into their instructional practices, consequently, creating a more positive and respectful learning environment.

The second study question is: How effective are different strategies to enhance second-year EFL students' engagement through the use of speech politeness? The hypothesis implies that using tailored speech protocol strategies has a positive impact on student engagement levels in second-year EFL classes. Thus, this study aims to measure the effectiveness of different strategies for enhancing second-year EFL students' engagement through the use of speech politeness.

Analysis of student responses indicates a preference for certain strategies over others. This suggests that particular positive politeness strategies, such as compliments and open-ended questions, and face-saving strategies minimize student anxiety, significantly impacting their willingness to engage in their learning. Interestingly, teachers also emphasized the importance of negative politeness strategies alongside positive ones to create an engaging classroom environment and enforce discipline. The observed increased engagement in classes where these strategies were employed further supports the effectiveness of using tailored strategies.

the findings affirm that the implementation of tailored speech politeness strategies yields a positive influence on student engagement levels. Students exposed to a combination of positive and negative politeness strategies report higher levels of engagement, validating the initial hypothesis and emphasizing the efficacy of tailored speech politeness strategies in enhancing student engagement

The final study question is: How can the awareness of students and teachers be raised regarding the use of politeness strategies in classrooms? The hypothesis proposes that increased awareness and understanding of politeness strategies among students and teachers lead to an increase in student engagement in second-year EFL classrooms. Thereby, the aim

of this study is to raise the students' and teachers' awareness towards the use of politeness strategies in EFL classrooms.

Analyzing data from questionnaires revealed that, while student preference leans towards positive politeness strategies, the teacher interview analysis alongside observational data suggest that both positive and negative politeness strategies play a role in fostering engagement. This highlights a potential gap between student perception and the instructors' knowledge. By integrating politeness strategies into classroom practices, teachers not only adhere to Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, emphasizing effective communication through adherence to maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, but also cultivate a more respectful and cooperative learning environment. Furthermore, analysis of teacher interviews shows how some teachers are more intentional with their application of politeness strategies, while others rely on natural implicit application.

These findings suggest that developing awareness of politeness strategies among both teachers and students could significantly enhance their communication skills and increasing student engagement in EFL classrooms.

3.6. Recommendations

This study explored the application of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory in the context of interactions and student engagement in EFL classrooms. Future research could investigate how politeness theory can be adapted across different cultures within the EFL context. Analyzing how cultural values influence the interpretation and application of politeness strategies could ensure teachers effectively bridge cultural gaps in the classroom.

Developing and evaluating training programs for EFL teachers on the use of speech politeness principles could be an interesting area to analyze. Furthermore, exploring how speech politeness strategies can be effectively applied for online learning environments is a crucial

area for future research. This might involve investigating the impact of different communication technologies on politeness and developing best practices for online interaction. Through addressing these areas, we can create a more nuanced understanding of politeness within the EFL classroom.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has delved into the key findings of the current chapter. The data collected was through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. This chapter was devoted to notions and recommendations that primarily focused at highlighting the impact of politeness strategies on learners' engagement. Also, the discussion explored the effectiveness of various the politeness strategies in fostering an engaging learning environment. In conclusion, this chapter has analyzed the data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, revealing the impact of politeness strategies on student engagement and the effectiveness of various strategies in promoting a positive learning environment.

General Conclusion

The field of education has undergone a crucial transformation in recent years, placing learners' well-being as an essential element in their educational journeys. This emphasis on classroom interaction and fostering a positive learning environment has become primary in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). With a growing focus on positive and engaging classrooms that encourage active participation, educators are acknowledging the value of speech politeness strategies. These strategies can foster effective communication and interaction between students and teachers. This study investigates the impact of speech politeness strategies employed by teachers on student engagement in second-year EFL classrooms.

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Questionnaires were distributed to 65 second-year EFL students, measuring their perceptions of classroom engagement and the politeness strategies used by their teachers.

Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with seven EFL teachers. These interviews focused on the teachers' understanding and use of politeness strategies in their classrooms, exploring their perceptions of its impact on student engagement. Classroom observations were also conducted, allowing researchers to observe teacher-student interactions and record instances of politeness strategies used in real-world settings. Thematic analysis was then employed to analyze interview data and identify recurring themes related to teacher politeness and its perceived influence on engagement.

The findings of the research supported the initial hypotheses. The study revealed that speech politeness strategies can create a more positive and respectful learning environment, fostering student engagement. Furthermore, increased awareness and understanding of politeness strategies among both students and teachers contributed to higher engagement levels. The implementation of tailored speech politeness strategies by teachers also had a positive

influence on student engagement. The study found a positive correlation between politeness strategies and engagement.

This research contributes to the field of TEFL by highlighting the importance of speech politeness in fostering a positive learning environment and promoting student engagement. By integrating an awareness of politeness strategies into their teaching practices, EFL educators can create more engaging and productive classrooms for their students. Further investigations could explore the effectiveness of specific politeness strategies in different EFL contexts. Additionally, research could delve deeper into the relationship between teacher and student politeness behaviors.

Limitations of this study include the relatively short duration of the investigation (four sessions) and the potential for selection bias due to student attrition (initial sample of 70, final sample of 65). Additionally, some students showed reduced engagement while completing the questionnaires. Lastly, some teachers were not available for interviews due to time constraints.

Overall, this research underscores the value of speech politeness theory in understanding student engagement in EFL classrooms.

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List of Appendixes

Appendix A

Dr. MOULAY TAHAR University of SAIDA
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Dear students,

You are kindly requested to response to our questionnaire as a research tool for the collection of data which serve our Master work which is entitled “Exploring Student’s Engagement Through The Speech Politeness Theory in EFL classrooms”; Remember, there are no right or wrong answers – we are simply interested in your experiences and opinions., and we really appreciate your participation and cooperation.

A. Personal information:

a. Gender :

Female

Male

B. Engagement Level:

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about engagement in EFL class

	Strongly agree	somehow agree	neutral	somehow disagree	strongly disagree
I actively participate in class discussions.					
When the teacher uses humor, I feel more motivated to learn and participate actively					
I feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes in my EFL class.					
The use of positive comments and compliments by the teacher makes me feel valued and more engaged in classroom activities.					
Invitations to share personal experiences create a welcoming atmosphere and encourage me to participate in discussions.					

2. On a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always), how engaged do you typically feel in your EFL classes?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Which of the following teaching strategies do you find most helpful in improving your engagement in class? (Select all that apply)

- Humor and jokes
- Open-ended questions and invitations to share opinions
- Positive feedback and compliments
- Indirect requests and suggestions
- Avoiding direct criticism and offering alternatives in feedback
- Formal language and respect for hierarchy

4. Do you think the way your teacher speaks to you and your classmates affects your engagement in the lesson? If so, how?

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5. Can you share any specific examples where polite or impolite communication by the teacher significantly impacted your experience in EFL class?

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Appendix B

Interview Questions for EFL Teachers: Politeness Strategies and Student Engagement:

Age:

Level of Education:

Years of experience:

A. Politeness Strategies in Instructions:

1. To what extent are you familiar with politeness strategies?
2. To what extent do you consciously use humor, jokes, and open-ended questions in your instructions?
3. How do you use positive feedback and terms of endearment to create a comfortable and motivating environment?
4. In your opinion, how do these positive politeness strategies impact student participation and confidence?

B. Negative Politeness:

1. When might you use formal address or apologies in your instructions?
2. Do you find face-saving strategies like offering alternatives or avoiding direct criticism helpful in promoting engagement?
3. Can you share specific examples of times when you used politeness strategies to boost student engagement in your class?
4. In your experience, have you encountered where certain politeness strategies hindered engagement?

Concluding:

1. Do you have any advice to novice teachers when using politeness strategies in creating an engaging learning environment for your EFL students?
2. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you think is important to understand about your use of politeness and its impact on student engagement?

Appendix C

Second Year University EFL Classroom Observation Sheet: Politeness Strategies in Instructions and Student Engagement

- Teacher
- Module
- Date and time

Strategy	Description	Frequency	Effectiveness	Comments
Uses humor or jokes to create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.				
Invites students to share opinions and participate actively.				
Compliments students' efforts and celebrates their successes.				
Terms of endearment: Uses informal language or terms of endearment				
Directness: Uses direct and explicit instructions.				
Uses indirect requests, suggestions, or hints instead of direct commands.				
N.P: address: Uses formal titles and language to maintain professional distance...				
Apologizes for mistakes or inconveniences.				
Uses phrases like "perhaps," "maybe," or "could you" to soften requests.				
Offers alternative solutions or avoids criticizing students directly.				
Verbal participation: Number of students actively responding to instructions, asking questions.				
Emotional Engagement: Level of interest, enthusiasm, and motivation displayed by students.				

Résumé :

Cette étude a exploré comment l'utilisation de stratégies de politesse par les enseignants (Brown & Levinson, 1987) a eu un impact sur l'engagement des étudiants en anglais langue étrangère (EFL) de deuxième année au département d'anglais de l'Université de Saïda. Les résultats suggèrent un lien entre la conscience des enseignants de la politesse et un engagement plus élevé des étudiants, des stratégies adaptées renforçant encore cet effet. La recherche souligne le potentiel des stratégies de politesse pour créer un environnement d'apprentissage positif dans les contextes d'anglais langue étrangère.

تلخيص

استكشفت هذه الدراسة كيف يؤثر استخدام المعلمين لاستراتيجيات المجاملات (براون وليفينسون ، 1987) على مشاركة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) في السنة الثانية بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة سعيدة. تشير النتائج إلى وجود علاقة بين وعي المعلمين باللباقة وارتفاع مستوى مشاركة الطلاب ، مع تعزيز الاستراتيجيات المصممة خصيصًا لهذا التأثير. يسلط البحث الضوء على إمكانات استراتيجيات اللباقة لخلق بيئة تعليم إيجابية في سياقات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.