

Linguistic Politeness in Mother Tongue: A Study of Politeness and Personality Types

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Abstract

This study aims to research the scale of politeness among different personality types. It is not based on scientific data and it does not claim to offer 100% true information as it uses an internet-based survey where all participants are anonymous.

Keywords: Politeness, linguistic politeness, personality types

INTRODUCTION

There is a certain link between politeness and pragmatics, which is a branch of linguistics dealing with language in use and the contexts in which it is used, including such matters as deixis, the taking of turns in conversation, text organization, presupposition, and implicature. Kádár (2017) stated that:

Pragmatics-based research on politeness started in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and has become one of the most popular areas in pragmatics. The field has undergone various methodological and theoretical changes. These include the “first wave” of politeness research, in the course of which researchers either attempted to model politeness across languages and cultures by using universal frameworks, or engaged in culture-specific criticism of such frameworks. In the “second wave” of politeness research, researchers attempted to approach politeness as an individualistic, and often idiosyncratic, interactionally co-constructed phenomenon. A key argument of the second wave is that politeness can only be studied at the micro-level of the individual, and so it may be overambitious to attempt to model this phenomenon across languages and cultures. In the “third wave” of politeness research, scholars attempt to model politeness across languages and cultures, without compromising the endeavour of examining politeness as an interactionally co-constructed phenomenon. (1)

Most people are familiar with the term “politeness.” But there might be people who do not know what "linguistic politeness" means. According to Olmen (2017):

Linguistic politeness can be defined as the ways in which language is employed in conversation to show consideration for the feelings and desires of one’s interlocutors, to create and uphold interpersonal relationships (so-called politic behavior), and to

comply with the rules for what society or one's culture considers appropriate behavior.
(p.1)

There are two types of linguistic politeness: Positive politeness and negative politeness. The word "negative" means a bit different than you may think. It doesn't arise any kind of rudeness at all. In fact, we still show politeness but we use it in situations that we want to avoid doing it when what is about to be said may be unwelcome, when we want to restrain somebody from doing something, and when we prompt expressions of respect. On the other hand, we use positive politeness when we feel sympathy for the situation. We show that we are interested in what's about to happen and we prompt expressions of social closeness. We are likely to care about the person or people that we interact with. Hence, these different kinds of attitudes have a connection to the term "politeness."

There are also different kinds of personality types among people. The two most basic terms above personality types are introversion and extroversion. Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI), the test system which helps people to learn their personality types -also the one people need to take before participating in this study-, has brought a new dimension to the types of personality by expanding the multiplicity of terms. Introversion and extroversion are still the basis of the scale, but it adds different characteristics in addition to them and creates sixteen personalities. So, personality types can be portrayed as more than just the two basic terms.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: What are the correlations -if there is any- between linguistic politeness and different personality types?

Q2: Is there a personality type that we can call as "the most polite" or "the most impolite"?

Summary of the Model Study

The model study researched that if there is any relationship between personality types (introversion and extroversion) and politeness. It took place in Azad University Ardabil Branch with the participation of 120 EFL learners whose mother tongue was Persian and Turkish. Their age ranged from 22 to 38 and they came from different socio-economic backgrounds. Researchers examined (ethically) these participants with two instruments. The

Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to test their politeness and Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI) to measure students' personality types. All of the data were entered into SPSS ("a software package used for interactive, or batched, statistical analysis") and then were analysed with the Pearson correlation ("a measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an interval scale"). The results showed that both personality type has a relationship between politeness; however, neither is more polite than the other. Essentially, the study indicated that personality types have no substantial roles on the politeness level of the learners.

Additionally, it is good to know: "This study raises awareness of the need for early detection of students at risk of experiencing impoliteness."

METHODOLOGY

Participants

As many people as possible will participate in this study in a particular timeframe. Their mother tongue will more likely to be Turkish. Their age will range from 16 to 52.

Instruments

The Attitude Analysis Survey (TAAS)

The survey starts with asking participants what are their personality types. Following, it asks what are the participants' age range. After that, it includes 25 situation-based questions that don't have any correct answers, each question has 5 options. Participants will choose the most suitable one for themselves and will not be graded. But each option has an invisible point (1=most impolite, 5=most polite) that will help to determine an abstract grading system.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI)

This test will help people to learn their personality type. It is not included fully in TAAS as there may be people who already know their personality type. Instead, its link address will be added to TAAS's description part to take the test separately.

The best reason to choose the MBTI instrument to discover the personality type is the fact that, according to the model study, hundreds of studies over the past 40 years have proven

the instrument to be both valid and reliable. In other words, it measures what it says it does (validity) and produces the same results when given more than once (reliability). The internal reliability level of the items is 0.77.

Differences Between This Study and the Model Study

Unlike the model study, which can be considered as in the "third wave" of politeness research, the present study will be in the "second wave" of politeness research. In other words, this study will not be including as many people with different ethnic backgrounds as the model study includes. Additionally, this study's participants will take the survey in their mother tongue (Turkish) and they will **not** be solely students. Moreover, the survey (TAAT) in this study will take place online.

Important Changes

1-) I was planning to set 25 questions in TAAS, but I did 10 questions. Because I thought it would increase the number of participants if I reduce the length of the survey time. Considering that if a participant doesn't know their personality type already, they should spend approximately 12 minutes to learn it before taking my survey, so I didn't want to scare them. Also, I thought it would be easier to analyse and organize the data.

2-) I was planning to ask the participants what their age is, but I changed my mind and didn't add an age scale. Because I thought I have nothing to do with their age. I mean, in my plans, I won't analyse the data with the consideration of their age in any way. Also, I thought it will make the participants feel safer about the survey. Because I can see the response immediately when a participant submits a survey, so if I see their age, I can make specific guesses between people I know.

RESULTS

Null-Hypotheses

There is no significant correlation between linguistic politeness and MBTI personality types, and there is no personality type that we can call as the politest or the most impolite.

As can be seen in the following excel templates, no personality type surpasses others in terms of linguistic politeness. Although the personality type involvements of the participants are not equal to each other, the templates, which were made according to each response of the

participants (100 participants*10 questions=1000 response in total), show that there is no personality type that we can call as the most polite or the most impolite.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		QUESTION-1	QUESTION-2	QUESTION-3	QUESTION-4	QUESTION-5
2	ISTJ					
3	ISTP	3,3,5	4,5,5	5,5,5	5,5,5	3,5,5
4	ISFJ	4,2	5,5	5,4	5,5	4,5
5	ISFP	4,3,4,5	3,4,5,5	5,4,5,4	3,3,4,4	4,2,3,4
6	INFJ	5,5,3,3,4	5,4,5,4,5	3,5,5,5,5	5,5,5,3,5	3,4,4,2,5
7	INFP	2,3,3,4,5,4,4,5,4,3,4,4,3	5,5,5,5,4,5,5,4,5,4,4,3	5,4,5,4,5,4,3,1,4,4,2,3,4	4,4,5,5,4,5,5,4,5,4,4,5	1,4,3,5,5,4,4,5,3,5,4,4,4
8	INTJ	4,4,4,4	5,3,3,5	4,5,4,2	5,4,5,4	5,2,4,3
9	INTP	4,3,5,5,4,5,2,3,5	4,4,5,5,4,5,5,5,1	4,3,4,5,4,3,5,4,5	3,4,4,5,4,5,4,4,1	2,4,3,4,2,4,3,4,1
10	ESTP	3,5	3,5	1,5	2,5	5,5
11	ESTJ	2,4,3,3,3	4,3,5,5,5	4,5,5,5,5	4,5,4,4,5	3,5,5,3,4
12	ESFP	5,4,5,5	5,4,5,5	5,5,4,4	3,5,3,5	4,5,4,5
13	ESFJ	5,5,3,4,5,4	5,5,5,4,5,5	5,5,5,5,5,5	5,4,5,5,4,4	5,3,3,3,4,3
14	ENFP	3,5,2,5,2,4,5,4,1,3,5,5,5,5,4,4	4,5,3,5,4,4,5,5,3,2,3,5,5,4,5,4	4,4,3,5,4,5,5,4,5,5,3,4,4,5,5,5	3,5,4,5,4,5,4,5,2,4,4,4,4,5,3,4	3,4,4,5,3,5,4,5,2,3,2,4,4,4,3,4
15	ENFJ	3,2,4,4,3,5,5,4,3,3,3,4,5	5,5,5,5,2,5,5,5,5,3,4,5,5	5,5,4,5,5,4,5,5,5,5,5,4,5	5,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,5,5,5,3,5	5,4,4,4,4,5,5,4,5,3,3,3,4
16	ENTP	4,3,5,3,5,4	5,4,5,3,5,3	4,4,4,5,4,4	4,4,5,5,5,5	4,4,5,5,5,2
17	ENTJ	3,2,2,5,3,3,5,3	3,5,4,4,5,3,5,3	4,4,4,5,5,4,5,4	4,4,4,4,3,4,5,4	3,3,3,3,2,3,5,3

	A	G	H	I	J	K
1		QUESTION-6	QUESTION-7	QUESTION-8	QUESTION-9	QUESTION-10
2	ISTJ					
3	ISTP	5,5,5	5,4,5	4,5,5	1,5,5	4,4,3
4	ISFJ	5,5	5,4	5,4	4,5	4,4
5	ISFP	4,4,5,5	3,5,5,3	4,5,3,5	4,4,5,4	4,4,4,4
6	INFJ	5,5,5,5,5	4,3,4,4,5	5,4,4,4,5	2,5,5,5,5	5,5,4,5,4
7	INFP	5,5,5,5,4,5,4,3,5,4,4,5	5,3,3,5,5,4,1,5,2,3,4,4	4,5,4,4,5,4,5,5,3,5,1,4,4	5,5,5,5,5,4,3,3,5,5,3,5,5	2,5,5,4,5,4,5,5,5,5,3,4,4
8	INTJ	5,4,5,4	5,3,5,2	5,3,4,5,5	5,4,5	4,4,5
9	INTP	4,2,5,4,5,5,4,5,5	3,4,5,5,3,4,1,2,5	4,5,4,3,5,5,3,4,5	5,1,5,5,1,5,5,4,5	4,2,4,5,4,4,3,1,5
10	ESTP	2,5	2,5	3,5	2,5	3,5
11	ESTJ	5,3,3,4,5	5,5,5,5,5	4,5,3,4,4	5,2,3,5,3	3,4,4,4,5
12	ESFP	5,5,5,4	5,5,4,4	4,4,4,5	5,5,5,5	5,5,4,5
13	ESFJ	5,5,5,4,5,5	5,5,4,3,4,3	5,4,2,4,5,4	5,5,5,5,5,4	5,5,4,3,5,5
14	ENFP	5,3,5,5,5,5,5,5,4,5,5,5,5,5,4	3,5,5,5,5,4,4,5,2,2,5,5,5,5,2	3,5,5,5,2,5,4,5,5,4,2,4,4,4,4,5	4,5,4,5,4,5,5,5,5,4,1,4,4,5,5,4	4,5,4,5,5,5,5,5,5,4,5,4,4,5,5,4
15	ENFJ	5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,4,5,3	5,5,3,4,5,4,5,4,5,5,5,4,4	5,5,5,5,4,4,3,5,5,5,5,3,4	5,4,5,5,5,5,5,4,5,5,5,5,5	5,5,3,5,5,4,5,4,5,5,5,5,2
16	ENTP	5,5,5,3,5,4	5,5,5,3,4,2	4,3,4,1,5,5	5,2,4,5,5,5	4,5,2,5,4,5
17	ENTJ	5,5,4,2,5,5,5,5	3,5,4,2,5,3	2,5,4,4,5,2,5,2	4,5,5,5,5,4,5,4	4,5,4,5,5,4,5,4

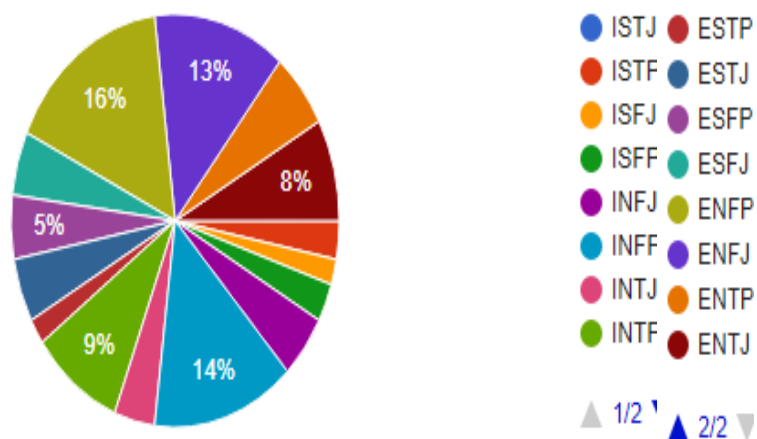
Explanation of the Templates:

There are 10 questions on TAAS. Every participant selected their personality type before they answer the questions. Since I could see every participant's personality types and their answers to the questions at the same time, I wrote down each response's data (basically the numbers) to the excel template I created. So, the numbers on the template equal to the politeness level of each answer (1=most impolite, 5=most polite).

The results are similar when compared to my model study. It was looking for a correlation between politeness and two basic personality types: introversion and extroversion. I expand it and looked for 16 MBTI personality types. I find that personality types have no control over our politeness, too. Also, Wang, Parawan, and Carney state that: “The MBTI was created in order to facilitate an understanding and appreciation of differences among human beings. No type is better than another” (p.10).

Variation of the personality types among the participants:

100 responses



Other Findings

ENFP, INFP, and ENFJ are the three most common personality types in TAAS results. Hence, I decided to make a comparison between two personality types which gave me the most

On the other hand, the most interesting thing that I found from the final data, as can be seen in the templates, is that nobody's personality type among the 100 participants is ISTJ. So ISTJ is the rarest personality type, I thought. But when I searched, I find that it is actually the 3rd most common personality type among 16 personalities.

Also, the most common personality type ISFJ has only two participants in my survey. Maybe these are some coincidences, but they push me to think that can different cultures have different personality types? What I mean is that TAAS's participants being Turkish people may affect the percentage of the personality type diversity. Because the most common personality types in the world seemed very few in the data that has been collected from 100 Turkish participants. Also, in my modal study, it is stated that:

Findings revealed that though in most situations the Korean learners did not differ from the native speakers of English, in some situations such as intimate friendships, there were differences, probably as a result of cultural factors. Similarly, a number of studies have attempted to present findings from cross-cultural comparisons related to politeness and have generally concluded that cultural background is an important factor influencing choice of politeness strategies (Ranjbar and Sadeghoghli, 2017) So maybe, this will be my next research topic: "Do cultural and ethnic backgrounds affect the proportion of the personality types?"

References

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