# Exploring Politeness and Face Act Theory in Teacher-Student Feedback: A Review of Literature

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*Abstract: This literature review explores the impact of politeness strategies in teacher-student feedback interactions, focusing on how they influence students' motivation, engagement, and interpretation of feedback. The review highlights that feedback delivered with politeness, including praise and hedging, fosters a supportive learning environment, enhancing students' self-esteem and willingness to engage in lesson activities. However, indirect feedback can lead to confusion, particularly in intercultural and digital contexts where non-verbal cues are absent. The review also identifies significant gaps in research, particularly regarding the role of gender and the unique dynamics of online feedback environments. Future research directions are proposed to address these gaps, including examining gendered communication styles in feedback and the effects of politeness strategies in digital and intercultural settings. The findings emphasise the importance of teacher awareness in delivering culturally sensitive and context-appropriate feedback. For educators, the review underscores the need for professional development in effective communication strategies to foster positive students' outcomes in both face-to-face and online learning environments.*

**Keywords: Politeness Strategies, Teacher-Student Feedback, Students' Motivation, Engagement, Cultural Differences, Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs), Digital Feedback, Gender Dynamics, Power Relations**

## Background

Linguistic politeness is a linguistic framework that proposes strategies used in communication to show consideration for others' feelings, fostering harmony in social interactions (Prayitno *et al*., 2021). Beyond playing a key role in communication, it is vital in an interaction where there are power dynamics and social norms, as well as in teacher-student interaction. The framework of Brown and Levinson (1987) explains "face" which is an individual's public self-image. This theory protects both the speakers and the listeners face. Politeness can be enacted through various strategies, including positive politeness (expressing closeness and solidarity) and negative politeness (acknowledging the others' autonomy and minimising imposition) (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Within the educational setting, teacher-student interaction is fundamental as teaching, learning and assessing is an inevitable process. Feedback is important for improving students' results and building students' self-esteem. However, feedback is inherently face-threatening, especially when it involves critique or correction (Donaghue, 2022). There is a need for teachers to balance feedback and criticism in preserving students' positive image and motivation to learn. Poorly delivered feedback can damage students' self-esteem and can also lead to discouragement.

Politeness strategies help teachers soften criticisms, express praise in ways that encourages improvement, and manage the inherent power imbalance in teacher-student relationships. Studies such as Ergül ( 2021) demonstrates that teachers often use hedging, mitigation, and indirect speech to reduce the impact of negative feedback and maintain rapport with students.

This study aims to analyse the existing literature on how politeness strategies are used in teacher-student feedback interactions within educational contexts. It examines both oral and written feedback, considering the ways in which teachers balance delivering feedback that is informative and constructive while also maintaining students' engagement and positive face. Moreover, the review acknowledges the increasing importance of digital learning environments, where teacher-student feedback interactions are mediated through technology. This literature review aims to fill this gap by considering emerging research on politeness in digital feedback contexts (Sun *et al*., 2022). Through this comprehensive analysis, the review seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how politeness strategies are employed in educational feedback, how they affect student outcomes, and where future research can expand the field.

## Objectives of the Literature Review

This study aims to explore the role of linguistic politeness strategies in teacher-student feedback interaction. The specific objectives were to:

- synthesise existing research on linguistic politeness strategies in teacher-student feedback interactions.
- identify gaps in the literature, particularly regarding cross-cultural differences and student perceptions.
- provide recommendations for future research and practical implications for educators.

**Scope of the Review**

The scope of this literature review includes a broad range of academic disciplines and methodological approaches, as politeness strategies in teacher-student feedback interactions are a multidisciplinary topic. To provide a comprehensive analysis, this review will cover works from linguistics, sociolinguistics, education, and pragmatics, as these fields offer key insights into the dynamics of language use in feedback contexts. The review will also draw on empirical studies from psychology and education to examine the impact of politeness strategies on students' learning and motivation.

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| Linguistic studies | Research that explores the theoretical underpinnings of politeness; model of politeness, politeness principles |
| Educational Research | Studies focused on teacher-student interactions, particularly on the role of feedback in the learning process. |
| Sociolinguistic Analyses | Research that examines how cultural and social factors influence the use and perception of politeness in feedback. |

**Summary of Search Methods and Resources**

Information were obtained from different relevant sources, such as peer-reviewed articles, textbooks, reports and journals, using information bases such as Google Scholar, IEEE Xplore, Science Direct, Springer, Scopus, SpringerLink, MDPI, IOP Science, and Statista Database. There was a thorough screening of the information bases listed above, using the topic of the review. Articles on peer review were focused on, however non-peer-review was also considered to cover topics that have limited resources. The abstracts of the selected articles were read to ensure relevance to the research topic. After which, the researcher checked the list of references in each article to source for further relevant or significant literature. The study limitation is streamlining the articles to suit the scope of the research and navigating the immense and multidisciplinary nature of information technology (Vidmar *et al*., 2021).

**Theoretical Frameworks on Linguistic Politeness**

This aspect of the research explores the foundational frameworks to the works of literature examined. Brown and Levinson (1987) Politeness Theory and Leech (1983) Politeness Maxims were explored with their relevance and implications on teaching and learning in class. These theories provide a foundation for analysing how teachers and students navigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) in feedback interactions and how politeness strategies help mitigate potential conflicts.

**Politeness Theory: Brown & Levinson (1987)**

Face is a concept within the politeness theory. This is an individual's public self-image or the emotional and social sense of self that people wish to protect during interactions (Tao, 2022). Teachers can help students feel more confident by giving praise and support. This means noticing when students put in effort, giving compliments, and offering assistance. Teachers sometimes need to be critical to manage behaviours that could limit students' freedom. When giving feedback, they might use gentle language to make criticism easier to accept. For instance, instead of saying directly, "You need to fix this mistake," a teacher might suggest, "Maybe you should take another look at this section." This approach puts less pressure on students. It is normal for teachers to point out errors or offer suggestions for improvement during feedback sessions. These interactions are a usual part of learning, as they help students grow and improve.

Teachers use variety of methods to deliver feedback that is both useful and sensitive to students' emotions. Rahayuningsih *et al* (2020) stress the importance of positive and negative politeness in feedback, showing how teachers aim to avoid hurting students' feelings. For example, positive politeness helps soften criticism to create a supportive and encouraging environment. Meanwhile, Trihartanti (2020) notes that indirect or cautious language is linked to negative politeness. This is particularly evident when feedback is not face-to-face, as teachers do not have the chance to immediately fix any misunderstandings, so they take care with their words. Additionally, Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) highlight how the power difference between teachers and students affects feedback strategies. Teachers often prefer indirect approaches to maintain respect and avoid offending students, ensuring their feedback is considerate and effective.

Institutional feedback significantly influences the application of politeness strategies, especially within academic environments where factors such as distance, authority, and the degree of imposition play a crucial role in shaping interactions (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

Teachers tend to employ negative politeness strategies, such as hedging, to reduce the imposition of their feedback, particularly in written form, where social distance is greater, and non-verbal cues cannot soften the impact of critique. This observation aligns with Oktaviani, Suharsih and Azis (2024), who suggest that positive politeness strategies are more prevalent in teacher-student interactions that involve closer social distance, such as in-class discussions, where frequent use of compliments and encouragement creates a more supportive learning environment.

## Leech's Politeness Maxims (1983)

Leech (1983) Politeness Maxims, an extension of the Cooperative Principle proposed by Grice (1975) is another important framework adopted in this study. While Grice focused on how speakers follow conversational maxims to achieve effective communication, Leech introduced the concept of politeness maxims to explain how speakers manage social harmony and minimise conflict.

In educational feedback, the approbation and tact maxims are particularly relevant as teachers frequently balance the need to correct students' work while also maintaining a supportive and positive relationship with the students. Studies such as Holmes (1995) have applied Leech's maxims to classroom discourse, demonstrating that teachers often employ the approbation and sympathy maxims to encourage students' engagement and reduce anxiety in feedback situations (Zemri, 2020).

The use of directives in feedback can be strategically managed through politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson's framework suggests that teachers may use positive politeness (emphasising solidarity) or negative politeness (hedging or mitigating) depending on the context and the relationship with the students. Research by Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasised the importance of effective feedback, noting that how feedback is delivered (including the politeness of directives) can significantly impact students' motivation and engagement.

- "I will help you with this concept next week."

- "I will provide additional resources to help you improve."

These statements serve to establish a collaborative relationship and can positively impact students' motivation and perception of teacher's support. The use of commissives can align with politeness strategies as well. For example, framing a comment in a way that acknowledges the students' efforts can enhance positive face (Guzzardo *et al*., 2021). A teacher might say, "I really appreciate your hard work on this assignment, and I will love to discuss how we can build on your ideas in our next session." This not only commits the teacher to further engagement but also reinforces the students' positive self-image.

Using expressives effectively can help to foster a positive learning environment and enhance the rapport between teachers and students (Zheng, 2022). From a politeness perspective, expressives can act as face-saving mechanisms that boost a student's positive face, especially when combined with constructive criticism. For instance, a teacher might say, "Your ideas are very innovative, but I think there is room for improvement in your argument structure." Here, the expressive is used to acknowledge the student's efforts before presenting a directive for improvement (Zheng, 2022).

## Power and Authority in Teacher-Student Interactions

Comprehending the dynamics of power and authority in teacher-student interactions is crucial for assessing the nature and impact of feedback. Feedback transcends mere information exchange; it occurs within a complex framework of social hierarchies and power relations (Gravett, 2022). This section will explore Norman Fairclough (1989) concept which is related to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to illustrate how power influences educational feedback. Additionally, Lev Vygotsky (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which investigates the effects of power on language usage, politeness, and the types of feedback provided in the classroom was examined.

## Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough posits that the use of language within educational settings acts as a platform for the exercise or challenge of authority and control. Feedback exchanges frequently exhibit power imbalances, with teachers holding authority over assessment and evaluation processes (Gravett, 2022). This authority can be expressed in various forms, including the specific language employed in feedback

and the implicit beliefs regarding the students' abilities and roles. For instance, a teacher's request to "Please revise this essay for clarity" inherently establishes a power dynamic, positioning the teacher as the assessor and the students as the recipient of the critique.

Moreover, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) underscores the significance of context in interpreting discourse. In the realm of feedback, elements such as cultural background, institutional practices, and societal expectations shape how feedback is constructed and perceived (Kanwar & Sanjeeva, 2022). For example, a directive may be interpreted as more courteous or respectful in certain cultural settings compared to others, influencing how it is received and the emotional reaction of the students. By examining feedback through the framework of CDA, researchers can reveal the mechanisms of power at play in these interactions and their consequences for students' involvement and learning outcomes.

## Sociocultural Theory and Power Structures

The Sociocultural theory of LevVygotsky ( 1978) provides an important viewpoint to understand how power dynamics and language function together within educational environments. Vygotsky showed that learning occurs through social interactions which shape cognitive development within cultural settings (Gravett, 2022). The dynamic of teacher-student interactions in classrooms remains unequal because teachers generally possess more knowledge and experience than their students. This difference influences the way language is used when teachers give feedback to students.

Vygotsky came up with the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This idea explains the difference between what a learner can do alone and what they can do with help from someone else. Teachers usually know more than their students, so they play a key role in helping learners grow by guiding them through this gap (Margolis, 2020). However, because teachers have authority, the way they give feedback and the way students take it can be influenced. For example, teachers might focus on students' following rules and fitting in, which might limit how much students can think for themselves and express their own ideas (Zemri, 2020).

The way power is used in giving feedback is very important. When teachers speak politely and encourage students to share their thoughts, it creates a more team-focused learning environment. For instance, rather than just telling students to fix mistakes, a teacher might ask, "What do you think about making this part clearer?" This question respects the students' input and still keeps the teacher in charge. This balance makes the feedback work better.

Vygotsky's theory highlights that social interactions and cultural tools shape how feedback is given and received (Tzuriel & Tzuriel, 2021). In classrooms with students from various culture, different views on authority and politeness can make giving feedback challenging. Teachers need to navigate these cultural differences carefully to ensure their feedback is constructive and respectful, acknowledging the students' diverse backgrounds.

## Critical Analysis

Vásquez (2004) studied how teachers can give feedback in a way that is not too harsh during classroom discussions. The study involved watching video recordings of teachers interacting with students, particularly when correcting mistakes. It was found that teachers often used different tactics to soften their feedback, making it sound gentler. They achieved this by using phrases such as "I think" or "maybe," which help make criticism less direct and less likely to hurt feelings. This approach is also mentioned by Cheng et al (2021) who explored how smiling and softening feedback are used in EFL language classrooms.

Vásquez also found that when teachers frame critiques positively, such as recognising students' hard work, they can protect the students' feelings. For example, a teacher might say, "You have done a great job on this part, but let us see how we can improve this section." This method not only highlights areas for improvement but also acknowledges the students' strengths, making the feedback more effective and uplifting.

The research emphasises how crucial it is for teachers to understand the impact of their words on students. By choosing their language wisely, teachers can foster a positive learning environment. This approach helps students view feedback as an opportunity to learn and grow, rather than as personal criticism (Cheng *et al*., 2021). The study therefore highlights how important politeness is in giving effective feedback and building good teacher-student relationships.

Holmes (1995) studies the use of polite language in classrooms to promote learning. This study found that when teachers affirm students' self-worth with positivity, it makes students more comfortable and willing to participate. Fabian (2024) supports Holmes' findings, stressing that positive communication is essential for building cooperation and strong connections in educational settings.

Fabian identified strategies such as finding common ground, explaining ideas clearly, and using humor as key to foster teamwork and boosting students' self-esteem (Fabian, 2024).

The studies also revealed that teachers often soften their feedback using compliments, inclusive language, and expressions of appreciation. This approach encourages students to engage more actively in class.

For example, when a teacher starts feedback with, "I really appreciate the hard work you put into this project. You have some fantastic ideas, and I will like to suggest a few ways to make it even better," it makes the students feel good and open to advice. Holmes discovered that presenting feedback in a positive way helps reduce any negative feelings about criticism. The study also showed that positive and polite strategies build good relationships and trust between teachers and students (Fabian, 2024). When students feel valued and respected, they participate more actively and respond better to feedback. Holmes pointed out that using positive language is not just about word choice; it is about creating a supportive classroom environment. In this atmosphere, students feel safe to speak up and try new things in their learning (Holmes, 1995).

**Language and Feedback**

The research conducted by Radojičić and Novakov (2022) on hedging and boosting techniques in academic writing serves to support the findings of Wu and Schunn (2020), who investigated the impact of peer feedback and students' perceptions during the revision process. Both studies underscore the significance of linguistic strategies and the comprehension of students in the realm of academic communication. Radojičić and Novakov concentrate on how the use of hedging and boosting can improve understanding in scientific writing across various fields, while Wu and Schunn examined how specific feedback elements, including solutions, explanations, and hedges, affect the likelihood of students acting on peer feedback. Their findings indicate that students' comprehension and agreement with feedback are predictive of their revisions, with solutions enhancing understanding and praise fostering agreement, thereby emphasising the influence of feedback perceptions on outcomes. In a similar vein, Radojičić and Novakov contend that directing students' focus towards linguistic strategies can bolster their understanding of scientific discourse, advocating for explicit instruction in hedging, boosting, and the interpretation of feedback to improve both writing and revision practices. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of sophisticated language strategies and feedback within academic contexts, pointing to the necessity for targeted teaching to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

The study highlighted the propensity of educators to employ hedging language, which indicates uncertainty or caution, as a means to soften critiques and foster politeness in their written feedback. By utilising hedging phrases, teachers communicate that their evaluations are not absolute but rather subjective judgments that allow for students' interpretation and development. For instance, remarks such as "You might consider revising this section for clarity" or "It seems there are several areas that could be enhanced" illustrate this hedging approach. These phrases not only convey a respectful tone but also encourage students to reflect on their work without becoming defensive.

Furthermore, the research identified a tension between the aspiration for politeness and the necessity for clarity in written feedback. Although hedging can mitigate the severity of criticism, excessive use may lead to ambiguity, hindering students' comprehension of the required improvements (Ryoo, 2023). Therefore, it is essential to prioritise a balance between politeness and clarity in written feedback to improve its overall effectiveness. Teachers should aim to provide clear, actionable advice while maintaining a respectful tone that acknowledges students' efforts.

The studies by Cunningham and Link (2021) and Gedamu and Gezahegn (2021) add important insights into how language functions in feedback, particularly in relation to technology-mediated and written feedback in educational settings. Cunningham and Link (2021) explore how feedback modalities, such as video and text, shape instructors' language choices in university ESL writing courses, finding that video feedback tends to be more balanced and socially considerate, while text feedback is often more negative. This aligns with Gedamu and Gezahegn (2021) in examination of EFL supervisors' written feedback, where directive language dominated over expressive functions, and a lack of balance between praise, criticism, and suggestions was observed. Both studies highlight the critical role of feedback tone and content in shaping student-instructor relationships and promoting students' development. Wu and Schunn (2020)'s exploration of peer feedback similarly underscores the significance of understanding feedback features, such as solutions and mitigating praise in influencing students' likelihood of revising their work. Radojičić and Novakov (2022) also emphasise how hedging and boosting strategies contribute to students' understanding in academic writing. Collectively, these studies emphasise that feedback, whether peer- or instructor-generated, is most effective when it carefully considers language choices, modality, and the interpersonal dynamics between students and instructors, suggesting that better training for feedback provision could significantly enhance the educational experience

The findings from these studies suggest that educators should strive to create written feedback that is not only polite but also clear and actionable. This can be achieved through the strategic use of language that acknowledges students' effort while providing explicit

guidance for improvement. For example, teachers can use a combination of positive reinforcement and constructive critique, ensuring that their feedback promotes student growth and confidence.

**Comparative Studies: Positive vs. Negative Feedback**

Aporbo *et al*. (2024) and Latrech and Alazzawie (2023) provide significant insights into the interplay of face-threatening acts (FTAs) and face-saving acts (FSAs) in classroom interactions, further highlighting the importance of politeness strategies in managing student-teacher dynamics. Aporbo *et al*.'s study, drawing from Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, reveals how teachers' FTAs; such as criticism, disapproval, and non-cooperation, impact students' positive and negative face, while FSAs, such as using jokes and hints, help mitigate these threats. This aligns with Latrech and Alazzawie (2023)'s exploration of politeness strategies in Omani EFL classrooms, where power distance and social dynamics shape how FTAs and FSAs are enacted. Their findings suggest that younger learners prioritise maintaining their positive face, often performing more FTAs than adult learners, who tend to favour negative face preservation and more direct error correction.

These observations align with the work of Agustina and Cahyono (2016), who asserted that power dynamics in the classroom influence how politeness strategies are implemented, with teachers balancing authority and students interaction to foster a communicative environment. Gedamu and Gezahegn (2021) similarly found that written feedback in Ethiopian public universities leaned heavily on directive language, often threatening students' positive face by focusing on content knowledge and linguistic accuracy. Cunningham and Link (2021) added another dimension to this by analysing the impact of feedback modalities (e.g., video vs. text) on language choices, showing that video feedback fosters more balanced and considerate interactions compared to text. Together, these studies highlight that both spoken and written forms of feedback require careful consideration of politeness strategies to maintain positive student-teacher relationships and foster an environment conducive to learning.

By synthesising these insights, it becomes evident that politeness strategies play a vital role in various educational settings and cultural contexts, particularly in their ability to address face-threatening acts (FTAs) and facilitate face-saving acts (FSAs). Whether in oral feedback (Latrech & Alazzawie, 2023), classroom interactions (Aporbo *et al*., 2024), or written evaluations (Gedamu & Gezahegn, 2021), educators must adeptly navigate intricate social dynamics, where the equilibrium between asserting authority and maintaining students' dignity is crucial for fostering engagement and enhancing learning. Furthermore, as technology introduces new avenues for feedback (Cunningham & Link, 2021), it becomes increasingly essential to comprehend how politeness strategies adapt across these different formats.

In the educational landscape, grasping students' perceptions of politeness in feedback is fundamental for cultivating constructive teacher-student relationships and improving educational outcomes. This section reviews studies that explore the impact of politeness strategies on students' motivation and engagement, as well as students' preferences regarding feedback styles.

**Impact of Politeness on Student Motivation**

Politeness in feedback is not merely a matter of etiquette; it truly impacts students' learning and motivation. Studies show that the manner in which feedback is provided can greatly influence students' self-confidence, enthusiasm, and eagerness to learn.

Mwambapa and Msuya (2022) researched the use of compliments to boost students' motivation. They found that praise and indirect criticism play key roles in the classroom. When teachers use polite speech and offer praise, it fosters a supportive environment. This is vital because it helps students feel appreciated and acknowledged for their efforts.

Pitt and Norton (2010) studied how softening negative feedback affects students' self-esteem. They found that students respond better to criticism if it is delivered with politeness and care. When teachers cushion negative feedback with gentler language, students are less likely to feel criticised harshly and more likely to see it as constructive. This way of giving feedback is crucial for maintaining students' self-esteem, as it separates their self-worth from their academic performance and makes learning a more positive experience.

Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) examined how politeness strategies, including positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald-on-record strategies, are employed in senior high school EFL classrooms. Their study revealed that these strategies were significantly influenced by factors such as institutional power, social distance, and age differences between teachers and students. The dominance of the teacher in classroom interactions highlighted the critical role that politeness plays in maintaining respectful, engaging, and motivational learning environments. Politeness strategies help mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) and preserve students' sense of self-respect, which is vital for creating a comfortable learning space.

Fong *et al* (2021) studied how politeness affects students' motivation. The study focused on how detailed and friendly feedback influences students' opinions. Their findings showed that when feedback was detailed and clear, students found it more helpful

compared to unclear feedback. This shows how important clear feedback is for encouraging motivation. However, they also discovered that being friendly in feedback was not always seen as helpful, especially when the feedback was very detailed.

## Challenges in Student Interpretation of Politeness

Using polite ways to give feedback in the classroom can improve communication and make interactions better between teachers and students. This can be helpful because it creates a more positive environment. However, sometimes being too polite can cause confusion. Teachers often use indirect feedback as a way to be polite. This means they give hints or suggestions instead of direct criticism. The goal is to make criticism feel less harsh and to keep the atmosphere supportive. But this method can sometimes make what the teacher is saying unclear to the students. This is not different from Park *et al* (2016) who examined how indirect feedback affects language learning. They found that while indirect feedback aims to create a good learning environment by giving hints, it can make the message confusing. For example, if a teacher says, "Maybe you should think about revising your thesis statement," the student might not know if there is a small problem or a big issue (Carless, 2020). This lack of clarity can leave students unsure about what the teacher wants. It can result in students not fully understanding what they need to do, which can lead to poor learning results.

Research by Lyster highlights that even though indirect feedback often comes from a place of wanting to be polite, it might not provide the clear guidance that is important for students to learn effectively (Park *et al*., 2016). As a result, students might not realize what areas need improvement, and this can slow down their academic growth.

## Cultural Differences in Interpreting Politeness

Cultural backgrounds play a big role in how students understand polite communication, especially with indirect speech. What seems polite in one culture might be seen differently in another, which can lead to misunderstandings in schools. Cohen (1987) discussed how different cultures interpret indirect speech in various ways, noting that not everyone understands politeness in the same way. In some cultures, indirect feedback might seem unclear or not honest, causing students to doubt the sincerity of the speaker. In contrast, students from cultures that appreciate indirect communication might feel uneasy with direct criticism, preferring more subtle and polite feedback (Sakarung, 2021).

These differences in understanding politeness are crucial in intercultural communication. Politeness strategies vary greatly between languages and cultures. Spencer-Oatey and Kádár (2021) explain that maintaining politeness across different cultures is key to keeping good relationships. They point out that what is polite in one culture might not be in another. This awareness of cultural differences is important for interpreters, who help people from different languages and backgrounds communicate effectively. Xiang, Zheng, and Feng (2020) explore how interpreters manage politeness in their work and highlight the challenges they face with language differences. They emphasise that politeness in one language often does not directly translate to another, so interpreters need to understand both cultures well to ensure the right meaning is conveyed. A notable finding from Xiang *et al*. (2020) is that interpreters use different strategies, like changing sentence structure and omitting some parts, to handle situations where someone's feelings could be hurt and to keep the conversation polite.

## Gaps and Limitations in Current Research

There have been many studies on how teachers use polite language when giving feedback to students, but some important areas still need more exploration. One key area is the influence of gender on these politeness methods during feedback.

Most studies tend to discuss politeness in general terms without considering how a teacher's or student's gender might impact these interactions. Research by Plug *et al* (2021) points out that communication styles often differ by gender, with women typically using more indirect and supportive strategies than men. However, very few studies have thoroughly investigated how these gender differences affect the delivery and understanding of feedback in classrooms.

This is a critical topic because feedback is not just about exchanging words—it is a social interaction affected by power dynamics and gender norms. For instance, research by Inan-Kaya and Rubie-Davies (2022) suggested that female teachers might use more positive and connecting strategies, while male teachers may prefer a more direct and critical approach. If we do not understand these gender-related nuances, students might misinterpret feedback based on the teacher's gender. More research into how gender shapes feedback interactions would enhance our understanding of classroom politeness dynamics.

Another area lacking comprehensive research is politeness in digital education settings, which have become even more relevant with the rise of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most existing studies focus on in-person interactions, but online feedback presents different challenges.

As noted by Anca (2021), online communication often lacks nonverbal cues such as tone and body language, which can lead to misunderstandings. For instance, written feedback from a teacher might seem blunt without these nuances. As digital learning becomes more prevalent, understanding how politeness is conveyed online is essential for effective communication and feedback.

Moreover, the asynchronous nature of online education can also affect how politeness is perceived and interpreted compared to real-time interaction. We urgently need more research into how students perceive and react to politeness in digital feedback scenarios to ensure these environments are supportive and promote successful learning.

**Future Directions for Research**

In light of the identified gaps in the current research on linguistic politeness strategies in teacher-student feedback interactions with the increasing prevalence of online and blended learning environments, there is a pressing need for empirical studies that examine politeness strategies in these contexts. In online classrooms, things work differently than in face-to-face settings, especially with feedback. Chung and Tang (2022) mentioned that it can be tougher to catch politeness online since you cannot see body language. This makes studying how teachers stay polite in digital feedback, like emails or video calls, very important.

Future research can examine how online feedback methods boost students' motivation and engagement. Studies might analyse how language, tone, and structure in feedback affect students' views on politeness and learning. Researchers could also look into how technology, such as emojis or informal language, influences polite communication in education.

Another research area is how gender and power dynamics shape politeness in teachers' feedback. While power relations are crucial in educational settings, gender's impact needs more research. Plug *et al* (2021) point out that gender affects communication styles and politeness, suggesting a need for further exploration in teacher-student feedback.

Research could explore how gender expectations influence teachers' politeness strategies and how students perceive them. Studies may find out if male and female teachers use different politeness levels and how students respond based on the teacher's gender. Understanding how students' perceptions of authority and politeness differ by gender could shed light on classroom interaction complexities.

**Summary and Key Findings**

Research about communication between teachers and students shows how language is essential for good education results. Some studies by people like Vásquez, Holmes, and Cheng explained that teachers often try to make criticism less harsh and keep students' confidence up by using softer language and giving compliments. This helps create a friendly environment, turning feedback into a chance for students to improve. Radojičić and Novakov also highlight the importance of using softer language in written feedback, making criticism clear without being too harsh. Cunningham and Link note that the way feedback is given is important; students often see video feedback as more balanced than written feedback, which impacts their relationship with teachers.

Cultural differences and gender roles make feedback even more complex. Spencer-Oatey and Kádár discuss how politeness can vary in different cultures, stressing the importance of understanding these differences when giving or receiving feedback. Plug *et al* pointed out that male and female teachers might use different politeness styles, changing how students perceive and learn from feedback. The research suggests that there's a need to look more closely at how politeness works in online learning environments. Without body language, interpreting messages can be harder, making understanding feedback more challenging. Future studies should explore how these factors change in virtual classrooms and how culture and gender affect the understanding of feedback.

**Implications for Teachers and Educators**

The conclusions from this review are vital for teachers. First, it s important for teachers to use appropriate politeness strategies when giving feedback. Choosing the right language, especially in sensitive situations, can foster a positive learning environment and help students accept feedback more easily. For instance, using encouraging words and recognising students' efforts can create a supportive and motivating atmosphere.

Additionally, teacher training programmes should highlight the importance of understanding cultural differences in feedback. Teachers need to learn how to navigate these differences to ensure their feedback is both respectful and effective. By understanding how culture influences students' perceptions of politeness, teachers can adjust their feedback to better serve their diverse classrooms.

Moreover, teachers should consider the methods they use for delivering feedback. With more learning happening online, knowing how to communicate politeness in writing is crucial. Studies indicate that using careful language in written feedback can enhance

clarity and maintain politeness. Therefore, training in effective written communication is essential for preparing teachers in today's educational landscape.

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