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Off-Record Politeness Strategies and Different Gender's Characteristics in *Woman at Point Zero* Novel

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History: Accepted 20 September 2022 Approved 11 January 2023 Published 15 March 2023	The use of off-record politeness strategies is a common phenomenon in communication. It proposes to keep somebody's feelings or self-image; moreover, it saves the speakers for not to be imposed when unwanted interaction happens. The speakers deliver indirect meaning politely using those kinds of off-record strategies. In applying these strategies, males and females have different and specific characteristics or language styles. This study analyzes off-record strategies in violating of maxim of relevance, quantity, quality, and manner. Thus, it explains the use of off-record politeness according to gender
Keywords: Politeness, Off-Record Strategies, Gender	Thus, it explains the use of on-record politeness according to gender characteristics and analyzes its relationship. This qualitative study uses categorization data instruments based on Brown and Levinson's off-record theory (1987) and Tymson's gender characteristics in communication (1998). The result shows that males frequently used rhetorical questions while females mostly used metaphor strategies. The frequent male's language style is succinct language meanwhile the female's is storytelling. The male speakers use female characteristics in using off-record and vice versa. It proves that there is an influential relationship between gender characteristics in the use of off-record politeness strategies. This study has fifteen off-record strategies which are explained with examples. It helps pragmatics learners acknowledge themself, especially in differentiating every strategy of off-record politeness.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an important tool of communication; the participants exchange information and meaning as well. When talking to somebody, the speakers do not always deliver a direct message. The ways of speakers speak may be different according to their necessities and the topic of discussion. With a proper strategy in speaking, people easily convey their meaning toward the social interaction. One of the common strategies is using off-record politeness as a pragmatic approach.

The participants do not always face the same situation; in addition, they may have problems in exchanging meaning. An unwanted interaction where the speaker feels being imposed by others can happen sometimes. In another condition, there is an uncomfortable part when the speakers can not say what they mean directly because they are afraid of threatening the hearers' feelings. These cases are examples of the perfect time for using off-record politeness strategies.

Off-record is a politeness strategy that focuses on making an implicit message. Expressing the information will not be direct to hide a particular intention according to the speakers' needs. Mohammed (2019) states that off-record politeness aims at making ambiguous and unclear statements; it hides the concepts and ideas of communication. In Nurmalasari, et al., (2021), the off-record politeness allows the hearers to have subjective interpretation toward the speakers' utterances. This is common happened in verbal communication where people do not express direct meaning in utterances. According to this, the speakers have purposes while using off-record strategies. For example for strengthening meaning, satirizing others. avoiding unwanted interaction, etc.

Off-record politeness consists of fifteen strategies in four different maxim violations (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In violating of maxim of relevance maxim, it has three strategies which are giving hints, association clues, and pressuposition. Violating quantity maxim has understated, overstated, and tautologies. Then, in quality maxim violation consists of contradictions, irony, *metaphors*, and *rhetorical questions*. The last is violating manner maxim that has *ambiguous*, *vague*, *over-generalized*, *displacing* H, and *ellipsis* strategies.

Focusing on the use of indirect meaning, it does not mean that off-record politeness is used without purpose. It is making the speakers feel safe and not to be imposed. According to Mansur (2016), all strategies of off-record politeness are distinguished by the independence of the speakers and hearers. The speakers get their freedom of speech without being afraid of taking responsibility for the hearers' face or self-image. Moreover, the hearers understand that the communication should be stopped politely; their self-image can be saved as well. Suwartama and Fitriati (2017) also support this by stating that politeness may save the face of the speakers and hearers in a conversation.

Learning politeness is very crucial in pragmatics because it deals with people's communication skill. Thomas (1995) explains that politeness has the main goal of fulfilling the speakers' goal. In the educational field, politeness is used to maintain interaction between students and teachers (Zaenul, 2016). In Rahayuningsih et al., (2020), studying politeness can help the classroom participants to elicit their communication ability. In conclusion, this aspect still becomes one of the most vital issues in classroom interaction.

In the way of speaking, the participants face obstacles and problems. The use of language cannot be implemented clearly if there are many resistors. Social factors affect communication such as gender; it is the characteristic of males and females in taking particular roles in society. Moreover, their roles as the language users who are speaking towards off-record politeness strategies. According to Azzahra et al., (2023), politeness is known as a crucial instrument that affects communication in a community. Different ways of using language come different because of cultural issues such as gender.

Gender becomes one of the influential factors in communication because it creates how people will communicate with others. Coates (2015) cited in Ambarita and Mulyadi (2020) states that men and women have different ways of using language to communicate in social life. Gender defines males and females that bring particular characteristics while having a conversation. It differentiates males' and females' characteristics in delivering meaning while using off-record politeness strategies. The influence of language use in different genders appears in pragmatics politeness. Syafrizal and Putri (2020) present the fact that women are more polite and respectful than men. Furthermore, Lorenzo-Dus and Bou-Franch (2003) state that women tend to use positive politeness to express feelings and emotions, maintain relationships, and decrease threats.

According to Tymson (1998), males and females have different language styles. It refers to the way how they speak in order to convey meaning. Moreover, Tymson's theory differs in seven categorizations for males and females.

Table 1. The Categorization of Gender'sCharacteristics in Communication by Tymson(1998)

Male	Female				
Focus on Information	Focus on				
	Relationship				
Report Style	Rapport Style				
Goal Driven	Process Oriented				
Single-task Approach	Multi-task Approach				
Succinct Language	Storytelling				
Working toward	On a Journey				
Destination					
Focus on the Answer	Focus on the Right				
	Question				

This study aims to find off-record politeness based on male and female characters in *the Woman at Point Zero* novel according to four maxim violations (relevance, quantity, quality, and manner). Moreover, special characteristics of language use in communication are categorized and analyzed according to Tymson (1998). Then it presents the influential relationship between different genders and the use of off-record politeness strategies.

Several studies have been done to analyze politeness in pragmatics and they focused on using Brown and Levinson (1987). There are previous studies that use literature sources as the data especially movies (Mahmud, 2019; Meiratnasari et al., 2019; Widyastuti, 2019; Rahayuningsih et al., 2020; Azmi, 2021; Fridolini et al., 2021; Henda and Anshari, 2021; Nurrahmah, 2021). Politeness is also related to cultural issues such as in Jahuri (2021) which studies politeness and Durinese in Batunnoni. It analyzes the sociolinguistics factor that is used by Durinese. All these studies have the same similarities; the data is taken from literature sources and it uses Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of politeness. Moreover, the difference is about the focus of the topic study. The previous studies analyze the common politeness strategies such as positive and negative politeness meanwhile this recent study bravely raises offrecord as the main issue.

Some previous studies discuss the same topic with this recent study. It aims to analyze offrecord politeness strategies with different research problems. It is conducted by Mansur (2016), Yanti (2017), and Mohammed (2019). The first study belongs to Mansur (2019) who relates offrecord politeness to translation matter. He uses a novel entitled *Bukan Pasar Malam* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer as a source of data analysis. Furthermore, Mohammed (2019) uses Hancani's short story to identify off-record politeness strategies. These two previous studies have similarities with this recent study because it analyzes literature sources.

The use of language is affected by social factors such as gender. Because the topic of this study is about gender and off-record politeness, so there are related previous studies. Gender becomes an influential factor that has a crucial impact on language use. It distinguishes how males and females are doing an interaction in society; moreover, it shows differences in the way they use politeness (Nurjanah et al., 2017; Sholikhatin and Indah, 2019; Esfahlan and Boroumand, 2020; Syafrizal and Putri, 2020).

Those previous studies focus on how politeness is used in different gender. Male and

female speakers in various fields can have particular ways to apply politeness strategies. The topics are interesting because it relates politeness to education such as speaking skill and EFL classroom. Thus, this recent study tends to talk about specific politeness strategies that analyze off-record and gender characteristics.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis design. It aims at identifying the off-record politeness strategies in violating of maxim of relevance, quantity, quality, and manner in different gender language characteristics.

According to Ambarita and Mulyadi (2020), the descriptive study focuses on providing objects that come from existing facts. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that qualitative study provides a natural setting for data collection. In this study, the source of data is male and female characters' utterances in the Woman at Point Zero novel.

The instrument for collecting data used discourse analysis focusing on categorization. Male and female characters' off-record utterances are categorized into fifteen strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987). In this study, there are two categorization tables. The first table instrument categorizes off-record politeness in four maxim violations (relevance, quantity, quality, and manner) according to different gender utterances. The second table instrument classifies male and female characteristics in communication based on Tymson's theory (1998).

The method of collecting data were reading the Woman at Point Zero novel and transcribing all male's and female's utterances. The method of analyzing data is divided into five procedures. First, categorizing male's and female's off-record utterances according to Brown and Levinson (1987). Second, analyzing how every off-record strategy is used by different gender. Third, distinguishing male and female characteristics in communication in the use of offrecord politeness based on Tymson (1998). Fourth, explaining the reasons why different language styles between males and females can influence the use of off-record politeness strategies. Fifth, identifying the relationship between gender and the off-record politeness strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Off-Record Politeness Strategies in Violating of Four Maxims

The result answers the first research problem which is questioning the off-record politeness strategies in four different maxims of violation. They are violating of

maxim of relevance, quantity, quality, and manner. The utterances are separated into two parts, male and female according to the gender types. The following data findings in the Table 2 show the frequency of male and female's utterances containing off-record politeness in every strategy.

Table 2. Categorization of male and female off-record politeness strategies

	Off I	Recor	rd Strat	egies	of Pol	itenes	S								
	Violate Relevance Maxim				Violate Quantity Maxim			Violate Quality Maxim Violate Manner I					Maxim		
Gender	Giving hints	Associatio	n Clues Presupposi	tion Understate	Overstate	Tautologie	s Contradict	ions Ironic	Metaphors	Rhetorical	Onestions Ambiguou	s Vague	Over-	generalize Displacing	H Ellipsis
Male	0	1	0	1	6	0	0	5	11	13	4	0	4	0	0

Female	1	2	1	15	13	1	0	6	22	13	4	1	4	0	1
Total Strategies	1	3	1	16	19	1	0	11	33	26	8	1	8	0	1

According to the Table 2, metaphors and rhetorical questions are mostly used by all characters in Woman at Point Zero novel. There are 33 utterances for metaphoric politeness and 26 containing rhetorical questions.

Metaphors strategy of off-record politeness tends to be used by females. It presents specific characteristics of the utterances containing analogical statements where the speakers compare two or more things with the same value. The speakers tended to utter comparisons and analogies of things. The same statement of Aristotle's theory, metaphors and comparison almost do not have significant differences (Muzaffarovna et al., (2022).

(Extract 1, Datum 291)

Firdaus : Because your finger nails are dirty, and I like them to be clean.

A metaphoric statement is very interesting for the speakers to express their language with the recent phenomena (Muzaffarovna et al., (2022). Examples of off-record utterances in this study seem unique because it is not delivered in normal ways. Female speakers are more sensitive toward feelings so they choose metaphoric utterance to deliver indirect meaning.

In the example above, Extract 1, the speaker hides the true meaning by saying a metaphoric statement. It aims at decreasing the risk of having communication with somebody. Moreover, what the speaker means can be misinterpreted by the hearer.

Although metaphors strategy of off-record politeness is mostly used by females, males also often apply this to minimize FTA (Face Threatening Acts). The utterance in Extract 2 gives the example of a male's metaphoric offrecord politeness.

(Extract 2, Datum 264)

Marzouk : I'm in business. My capital is women's bodies and I don't mix work and love together. The utterance above compares women's bodies with the object of the prostitution business. In this novel, the speaker is a pimp; a boss of a prostitute who leads prostitutes to find clients and collect money. This common phenomenon happens in Arab; in addition, metaphoric language is also adapted according to the cultural issues. In Miao (2023), metaphors are influenced by many factors such as politics, culture, and human characteristics.

Rhetorical questions become another offrecord politeness strategy that is used more often in this novel. Males and females have the same frequency of the utterances. The rhetorical questions strategy is about how the speaker asks an unanswered question. There is no purpose in delivering messages. It has several intentions why the speaker questions this to the hearer. According to this study, rhetorical questions of off-record politeness are mostly used to strengthen what the speaker means without telling its true meaning. The following data presents the example.

(Extract 2, Datum 264)

Fawzy : What the hell, woman! Must not what, and Prophet what? Who's this Shawki? I'll cut his throat.

(Extract 3, Datum 209)

Sharifa Slah el Dine : Does it not give you pleasure to eat roast chicken and rice? Does it not give you pleasure to wear these soft, silky clothes? Do you feel pleasure at living in this warm, clean house, with its window overlooking the Nile? Does it not give you pleasure when you open the window every morning, and look out at the Nile, and the sky, and the tress? Isn's all this sufficient for you? Why do you ask for more?

The utterance above contains questions that should not be answered. The speaker strengthens his meaning toward the hearer that he is angry. He wants to be obeyed and can not be threatened because he has a higher power than the hearer.

This strategy implies that the speakers' social power is higher than the hearers. This novel mostly talks about the patriarchy era in Arab which emasculates women's power. Women's empowerment is raised through feminism; thus it has been represented by female characters in this novel. This condition creates a cultural behavior where women try to build their own social power for not to be dominated in society. For example, like the female character, Sharifa Slah el Dine speaks a rhetorical question off-record strategy to emphasize her meaning. Her statement is undebatable because she has a bigger power than the hearer. On the other hand, she takes control.

According to the data findings in this research problem, it shows that the use of offrecord politeness strategies is different. Male and female have their tendencies when speaking indirectly, especially for delivering sensitive statements. However, males and females can communicate in all off-record strategies of politeness to convey meaning without exception.

That is why the data findings show some strategies that are not used by the characters. For example, contradictions and displacing H offrecord strategies. Furthermore, it presents males using one strategy but there is no female utterance found. For example, one utterance of tautologies strategy is only spoken by a female character in the novel.

Based on the data, it proves that people use off-record politeness strategies in different ways. To avoid the risk of communication, the speakers choose the most proper off-record strategies based on their situation and necessity. According to this result, people especially pragmatics learners have deeper learning sources about off-record politeness. Furthermore, this strategy is rarely discussed so future researchers who are interested in the same topic can use this recent study as a reference.

The examples of off-record politeness utterances in Woman at Point Zero novel become the analysis source for language learners such as EFL students. It becomes a proper teaching and learning material for particular subjects; for example analyzing grammar, meaning, and discourse. Moreover, every off-record strategy in this novel contains an interesting topic that is about feminism and patriarchy.

Gender's Characteristics in Communication through Off-Record Politeness Strategies

The result of gender characteristics in communication in the use of off-record politeness strategies answer the second research problem. Gender language characteristics or language styles use the basic theory of Tymson (1998).

Males and females have specific characteristics in the language use especially when the speakers communicate through offrecord politeness. The following table shows the result study about the frequency of gender characteristics in the use of off-record politeness.

Table 3. Gender Language Characteristics in the

 Use of Off-Record Politeness Strategies

Male	Frequency	Percentage				
Focus on	8	11				
Information						
Report Style	1	1				
Goal Driven	9	13				
Single-task	0	0				
Approach						
Succinct Language	14	20				
Working toward	0	0				
Destination						
Focus on the Answer	3	4				
Female	Frequenc	Percentag				
	у	e				
Focus on	4	6				
Relationship						
Rapport Style	4	6				
Process Oriented	2	3				
Multi-task	1	1				
Approach						
Storytelling	21	30				
On a Journey	0	0				
Focus on the Right	3 4					

Table 3 presents the frequency of the classification of gender characteristics in

communication. Males and females produce the tendencies of language styles while using offrecord politeness strategies. It states briefly that male and female interact differently and brings their particular characteristics.

From the result, *succinct language* style of speaking is the most frequent male characteristic. The off-record politeness strategies are spoken by all characters in a short way. *Succinct language* means that the speakers, whether male or female keep the gist of information. So the hearer understands what the speakers mean easily although they interpret it independently. *Succinct* style helps them to search for the true meaning in the indirect speech of off-record politeness.

(Extract 4, Datum 268) Firdaus : I don't know. (Extract 5, Datum 393) Marzouk : It hasn't died yet.

The utterance above is an example of a *succinct language* that is delivered by male and female characters. This language characteristic tends to be spoken by males because they like to communicate in a short way.

In social interaction, males do not like to waste their time when having a conversation. They focus on achieving the goals of communication that is finding a solution or an answer. It becomes the main reason why male speakers look more boring and unattractive than females.

Besides *succinct language*, there is another the most frequent gender language characteristic applied in the novel. *Storytelling* is commonly spoken by all genders, males and females enjoy in creating long utterances. The following utterances can be the examples of *storytelling* language style in the use of off-record politeness.

(Extract 6, Datum 399)

Marzouk : I'm giving her everything. My money, my mind, my body, my being, my energy. Everything, and yet I feel that I do not satisfy her, that she's in love with another man.

(Extract 7, Datum 193)

Sharifa Slah el Dine : Yes, exactly like a snake. Life is a snake. They are the same, Firdaus. If the snake realizes you are not a snake, it will bite you. And if life knows you have to sting, it will devour you. In Extract 6 and 7, *storytelling* is spoken by male and female characters. This language style tends to be used by females in a conversation because they are more sensitive than males. Female speakers notice people's feelings so they will be more careful when talking to others. It describes

In *storytelling*, the utterances are longer because it is kind of describing something. The speakers deliver the information in detail illustration. Moreover, *storytelling* is categorized as a reporting style of language. The detailed information helps the hearers interpret what the speakers actually convey.

In the Extract 6, the speaker is describing the specific condition in detail. He reports what actually happened in his life. He is telling the hearer about his love story through long sentences to give more information. Meanwhile, in Extract 7, the *storytelling* style is also applied to give an illustration about something. The speaker explains the philosophical value about life and a snake.

According to data findings, it shows differences of gender characteristics in communication. The language styles of male and female based on Tymson (1998) are also used by the characters in speaking off-record politeness. In delivering indirect meaning, males and females present their particular language characteristics.

However, language is very flexible because it does not have exceptions to be applied in communication. Males' characteristics such as *succinct language, report style, and goal-driven* or *single-task approach* can be used by female speakers. This case also happens in reverse where males speak like females using *storytelling, multitask approach*, or *rapport language* style.

The reason why language characteristics of gender is flexible is because of its different purpose. Males or females have personal necessities and goals while having a conversation. When they are speaking indirectly through offrecord politeness strategies, they use a proper way. The language use can be more personal because it depends on the participants' wants, feelings, conditions, needs, and purposes. In fact, they will choose the most proper language characteristics.

The theory of gender characteristics in communication-based on Tymson (1998) is the proper theoretical framework for studying language use in pragmatics. Differentiating gender's language styles can be important for language learners especially when they are applying off-record politeness strategies in a real conversation. Moreover, learners understand how language is produced by males and females with their particular communication styles.

The Relationship between Gender and Off-Record Politeness Strategies

This study finds a relationship between gender and the use of off-record politeness strategies. All characters show different gender characteristics in specific ways when they are speaking in off-record politeness. It made the language way of males and females becomes unique because they have particular tendencies.

Males' language characteristics are more masculine and females have a bigger understanding (Syafrizal & Putri, 2020). In Tymson's theory (1998), the language styles of men actually are clearer and more direct. Meanwhile, females concerns with feeling and emotion. Maintaining relationships becomes important so the utterances will be more emphatic, long, and detailed.

The result showed that *succinct* language style is frequently spoken as male characteristics. But, female characters in the *Woman at Point Zero* also used it to deliver meaning. The same cases happened when males apply *storytelling* in the off-record utterances. Thus, it is categorized as female characteristics in communication.

(Extract 8, Datum 64)

Wafeya : You are living in a world of imagination, Firdaus.

The utterance above contains off-record politeness in *metaphors* strategy which is violating quality maxim. The female speaker uses male language characteristics in the language use. She speaks in *focus on information* as the language characteristic of males to convey indirect meaning about Firdaus. This language style belongs to males because they tend to speak directly and be straight to the point. The goal of the communication becomes obvious although she delivers it indirectly through off-record politeness.

(Extract 9, Datum 156)

Bayoumi : *What can I do, get the heavens to intervene for you?*

The utterance above is spoken by males; furthermore, it contains female language characteristics in communication. The speaker told the meaning indirectly through *metaphors* offrecord strategy of politeness. The speaking style is *storytelling* which is usually applied by females. But, the male characters in this novel also explain his meaning by giving an analogy. He is expressing anger by saying the impossible thing is intervening heavens for a woman.

According to Extract 8 and 9, there is an influential relationship between gender and offrecord politeness strategies. Gender has particular characteristics which reveal male and female tendencies in language use.

Men can be more understanding by speaking in female language characteristics. Such as in Datum 156 where the speaker uses *storytelling* to hold his anger toward the hearer. His metaphorical off-record strategy sounds more polite. Coates (1998) cited in Maharani (2020) supports this statement by stating storytelling, questioning, and hedging are strategies that can maintain interaction and avoid social distance.

On the other hand, females who tend to be feminine and feeling-oriented can prioritize their meaning in communication. While they use male language characteristics, the utterances become more clear, shorter, and straight to the point. In Datum 64, it uses *metaphors* off record strategy but the speaker speaks by focusing on the information. She wants to tell the hearer about her real feelings; thus, the hearer can understand easily what she means.

According to this explanation, gender and the use of off-record politeness strategies have an influential relationship. In delivering indirect messages through off-record strategies, males and females still can be more polite and maintain good interaction.

CONCLUSION

Off-record politeness strategies imply the goal of communication to deliver indirect meaning but still maintain the relationship. In this study, males and females use off-record politeness strategies. Different gender actually has different tendency in speaking indirect meaning through off-record politeness strategies. In addition, while they speak indirectly, there are particular gender language characteristics. There are male and female language styles but it can not be used as the constant standard. Male speakers communicate in female ways and vice versa according to their purposes and needs in communication. This also proves that gender and the language use toward off-record politeness strategies have an influential relationship. Gender affects language use; moreover, males and females may have differences in language characteristics in presenting indirect meaning.

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