

## **THE INFLUENCE OF THE ADDRESSERS' AND THE ADDRESSEES' GENDER IDENTITIES ON THE ADDRESSERS' LINGUISTIC POLITENESS BEHAVIOR: SOME EVIDENCE FROM CRITICISMS IN TAIWANESE MEDIA DISCOURSE**

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### **Abstract**

People's power and status can be manifested through the language they use. It was generally perceived that men's speeches are more assertive and direct than women's because of men's higher social status in the societies. Yet, studies have argued that there should be no difference in terms of men and women's linguistic politeness behaviors if they are in the same power position; instead, the addressees' gender is the critical determinant to the addressers' linguistic performances. This research provided some evidence from evaluative communications in TV reality talent shows to further verify whether or not the addressers' and the addressees' gender identities are significantly correlated to the addressers' linguistic politeness behavior, focusing specifically on their use of mitigating strategies for criticism amelioration. The current analysis referred to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and face notion. Results manifested that it is the addressers' gender instead of the addressees' gender that was related to the addressers' communication style in this particular situational context. Specifically, male judges utilized more mitigating utterances than female judges did. The major implication of the findings is that the functions of politeness devices that speakers perceive and the situational information of the speech context leave greater influences on the addressers' politeness behavior than the gender of their addressees.

**Keywords:** Linguistic politeness behavior; Gender; Face-threatening act; Criticism; Mandarin Chinese; Media discourse.

### **1. Introduction**

As suggested by Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, while having conversations, addressers should be cooperative with their addressees by making their conversational contribution as much as is required by the purpose or direction of their exchange. Put differently, speakers of a preferred communication should "speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information" for their partners (Levinson 1983: 102). Substantial studies, however, have empirically evidenced that people are not always as cooperative as they are expected to be while taking part in interpersonal communications in various situational contexts. In fact, speakers frequently utilize indirect utterances with inconsistent propositional and inferred contents while interacting with others, although they are aware that indirect utterances may jeopardize the clarity of their communication intents (Brown & Levinson 1987; Holmes 1995;

Leech 1983; Reid 1995; Rundquist 1992; Searle 1969, 1975; Zhang 1995). The motivation for people to diverge from direct utterances is primarily to maintain their addressees' face need, especially in public situations (Brown 1980; Brown & Levinson 1987; House & Kasper 1981; Watts 2003). Goffman (1976) is the one who first proposed the notion of face, which refers to the image "located in the flow of events, supported by other people's judgments and endorsed by impersonal agencies in the situation" (p. 5). Expanding Goffman's notion, Brown and Levinson (1987) later assimilated people's face to their self-esteem and social image and developed a politeness theory. In Brown and Levinson's framework, there are two aspects of face, including positive face and negative face, where the former represents one's need to be admired and appreciated by at least some others, while the latter refers to one's need of self-autonomy and to be free from imposition. After examining English, South Indian Tamil, and Tzeltal, Brown and Levinson maintained that people's face want is a cross-cultural phenomenon.

Although face is a worldwide concept, some illocutions inherently deprive the addressees of their face need, such as *requesting*, *complaining*, and *criticizing* (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Brown & Levinson 1987; Holmes 1990; Itakura & Tsui 2011; Zhang 1995). To maintain the addressees' face needs and minimize the destructive effects while doing face attack acts, addressers may draw on some linguistic politeness devices to moderate the illocutionary force of their speeches. In the literature, both the addressers' gender and the addressees' gender have been well acknowledged to be important determinants to people's linguistic politeness behavior (Brown 1980; de Bie 1987; Duijm 1987; Goodwin 1980; Haas 1979; Holmes 1995; Holtgraves & Yang 1990; Johnson & Roen 1992; Johnstone et al. 1992; Kitagawa 1979; Lakoff 1973, 1975; Reid 1995; Rundquist 1992). Concerning the relationship between the addressers' gender and their linguistic politeness behavior, there is a sweeping generalization that women are more polite than men. In the literature, the discrepancy between men's and women's linguistic politeness behaviors has been often attributed to female speakers' relatively subordinate social position in the societies (Brown 1980; Brown & Levinson 1987; Coates 1996; Goodwin 1980; Haas 1979; Holmes 1989, 1993a, 1993b, 1995; Ide et al. 1986; Lakoff 1975; Reid 1995). Based on utterances of elementary school children, Haas's (1979) found that boys tended to employ explicit directives, while girls produced more directives that were moderated with mitigations. In Goodwin's (1980) investigation into utterances of African American adolescents, female teenagers were evidenced to utilize more linguistic politeness strategies than their male counterparts. Brown (1980) in his study of Mayan adult speakers' communication styles documented that both male and female informants employed politeness particles in their communications, yet politeness particles were more frequently found in women's utterances. In addition, the addressees' gender has also been evidenced to be a significant factor that accounts for speakers' linguistic stylistic variations in various situational contexts. In their investigations into communications between teachers and pupils in the academic discourse, de Bie (1987) and Duijm's (1987) have noted that while male pupils might receive explicit and implicit criticisms, female pupils only received implicit criticisms from their teachers. Furthermore, female pupils obtained more explicit positive evaluations and compliments than male pupils did. In her investigation into minimal responses in interviews, Reid (1995) noted that the frequency of the interviewers' interactional work was significantly higher when they were

speaking to female interviewees than male interviewees.

While enormous prior investigations have empirically evidenced a tight relationship between the addressers' linguistic stylistic variations and the gender identities of the addressers and the addressees, there are some counterarguments in the literature. Based on spontaneous communications between ticket-sellers and ticket-buyers collected in Amsterdam train station, Brouwer et al.'s (1979) and Brouwer (1982) noticed that the linguistic politeness variations between male and female speakers disappeared in the situational context where they were in a symmetrical power relationship; instead, it is the gender of the addressees that was significantly related to the communication patterns of the speakers. Specifically, both investigations have documented that ticket-buyers used more polite utterances, such as *thank you* and *please*, to male ticket-sellers than female ticket-sellers while buying train tickets. The reason why male ticket-sellers received more polite languages was first attributed to the smaller number of male ticket-sellers than female ticket-sellers in that particular job position. In addition, men's stronger demand of respect was argued to be another possible contributing factor for the inclination that ticket-buyers displayed more polite behaviors to male ticket-sellers. While considerable attention has been paid in the past to research issues related to the relationship between linguistic politeness variation and gender, substantial researches either focused specifically on the variable of addressers' gender or addressees' gender. Few relevant studies have taken both variables into consideration. Therefore, this study was designed to further illuminate the relationship between the addressers' communication style and the gender identities of the addressers and the addressees. I do this by looking into the evaluative languages used by male and female judges in reality talent shows on TV, focusing specifically on their linguistic politeness behaviors while giving criticisms to male and female contestants. In this study, linguistic politeness behaviors specifically referred to languages that express the judges' intention to moderate the face-threatening effect carried by their criticizing communications while doing evaluations. The current analysis of linguistic politeness behavior was based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and face notion. The illocutionary transparency of the judges' criticisms, mitigations within the criticizing illocutions, and mitigating utterances at the discourse level were targeted for analysis. Brouwer et al.'s (1979) and Brouwer's (1982) research findings led me to the following hypotheses: (1) due to male and female judges' symmetrical status hierarchy in the judges' panel, there should be no significant differences between their linguistic politeness behaviors while doing criticisms but (2) the judges' linguistic politeness behavior should be closely related to the gender identity of their addressees, namely the participants of the talent competitions.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 details the source of the database and means for data coding and data analysis. Section 3 presents the quantitative results, which are discussed in Section 4. In Section 5, conclusions are drawn, where suggestions for future studies are also provided.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Source of the data

Nowadays, reality talent show on TV is characterized as competition and each contest includes a preselected judges' panel, which is generally composed of several experts of different genders in a particular field. The male and female judges of an evaluation panel share the same authority power due to their identical role in the same situational context. In this study, the judges' evaluative communications in TV reality talent contests, particularly their criticisms towards the contestants, were targeted for analysis. The data of this study were collected from two Taiwan-based talent shows, including *Super Designer* and *Super Idol*, which were broadcasted from 2010 to 2012. The reason why two different programs were included in the present database was for balancing the number of the judges and the contestants of different gender identities. In the observed competitions, there were 39 judges, including 17 females and 22 males, and 280 contestants, including 139 females and 141 males. The present study made no attempt to manipulate the addressers' and the addressees' social class, educational background and/or age.

In this study, criticism was defined as negative commentary towards the choices, performances, attributes, etc. for which the addressees should be responsible. Identifications of criticisms were primarily based on the semantic and pragmatic features of the languages that judges used to convey their communication intents. During the processes of criticism elicitation, contextual and cultural information of the communications analyzed were also taken into consideration. The database of this investigation comprised of 108 talent contests. From the present database, the elicited criticisms amounted to 921 instances in total, among which 234 instances were addressed by male judges to male contestants (M-to-M dyads), 230 instances were addressed by male judges to female contestants (M-to-F dyads), 225 instances were addressed by female judges to female contestants (F-to-F dyads), and 232 instances were addressed by female judges to male contestants (F-to-M dyads).

### 2.2. Data coding and analysis

In this investigation, I drew on the model of linguistic politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) to analyze how the judges of TV reality talent contests utilized mitigating strategies to moderate their negative commentaries. Yet, I am critical of the assumption underlying Brown and Levinson's theory that sentence is the fundamental unit for analyzing linguistic politeness strategies. That is because a large segment of linguistic politeness in Chinese communication is, in fact, manifested through utterances at the discourse level (Skewis 2003; Yu 1999, 2005; Zhang 1995). Speech event, therefore, should be a better analytical unit for examining people's politeness variations in spontaneous communications. In this study, the CCSAPR coding schema developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) was, therefore, applied to code the judges' criticizing communications for linguistic politeness analysis. Based on Blum-Kulka et al.'s sense, a criticizing event can be segmented into *head act* and *supportive move*. The *head act* is the criticizing illocutionary act that delivers the speakers' negative

commentary, while the *supportive move* is the utterance at the discourse level that attenuates the negatively affective language within the head act. It should be especially noted that since supportive move is not obligatory in speech event, it is likely that no supportive utterance is actually applied to mitigate the adverse consequence of the criticizing illocution. Yet, in natural spontaneous communications, it is very common that a criticism is moderated by a combination of pre-posed and post-posed supportive utterances, as Table 1 shows. In this instance, the speaker first utilized the supportive move of *praising* to show her friendliness to the addressee before she actually expressed her negative commentary towards his singing technique. Subsequent to the realization of the criticizing illocution, the judge then employed the post-posed supportive moves of *reasoning* and *suggesting* to redress the impingement of her critical opinion and to create a solidarity tie with the addressee

Table 1. Example of criticizing event

Speech move	Example <sup>1</sup>
Pre-posed supportive move (praising)	nà Lín Lì-háo de bùfèn dehuà jiùshì nǐ <i>well (proper name) GEN section if PM you</i> dòngzuòshàng zhēnde yǒu hěn dà de jìnbù. <i>movement-wise really have very great NOM improvement</i> ‘Well, as for Lín Lì-háo, your body movement really improved a lot.’
Head act (criticizing)	ránhòu kěshì yòng rock de fāngshì qù chàng <i>PM but use ASSOC method to sing</i> Super Junior de gēqǔ jiù huì yǒudiǎn guài. <i>GEN song then would a little bit strange</i> ‘But, it was a little bit strange to use the technique for singing rock songs to sing the songs of Super Junior.’
Post-posed supportive move (reasoning)	yīnwèi bìjìng chàng wǔqǔ de fāngfǎ shì <i>because after all sing dance music ASSOC method EMP</i> gēn rock shì bú tài yīyàng de. <i>with EMP not too same NOM</i> ‘That is because the technique for singing dance music and the technique for singing rock music are not so similar after all.’
Post-posed supportive move (suggesting)	nà jīběnshàng rúguǒ nǐ yìzhí zhào nàge fāngfǎ <i>well basically if you always follow that method</i> qù chàng dehuà , jiù huì juéde hǎoxiàng nǐ <i>to sing if then would feel seem you</i> de biǎoqíng jiù huì hěn yízhí , suǒyǐ jiù <i>GEN look then would very consistent so then</i> yǒudeshíhòu yào shāowéi tūpò yíxià zìjǐ. <i>sometimes must somewhat challenge a little bit self</i> ‘Well, basically, if you use that particular singing technique to sing every song, it will turn out that your performances within a couple of weeks are very consistent; thus, sometimes, you should challenge yourself a little bit’.

In this research, the illocutionary transparency of the criticisms, the redressive devices for moderating their illocutionary force, and the supportive mitigating utterances at the discourse level were targeted for examination. To analyze the illocutionary transparencies of the collected criticisms, Brown and Levinson’s (1987)

<sup>1</sup> The full terms of the abbreviations in the glosses of the examples are given in the appendix.

strategies for actualizing face-threatening speeches were referred to. According to Brown and Levinson, a face-threatening illocution can be on-record or off-record, where the illocution transparency of the former is higher than the latter. If the speakers' illocutionary intents could be directly inferred from the semantic meanings of the utterances, the criticisms were coded as on-record, while the criticisms were coded as off-record when the speakers' communication intents did not directly correspond to the semantic meanings of their utterances. Due to their illocutionary opacities, the implications of off-record criticisms should be inferred from the situational information of the concerned speech contexts. In addition, based on Brown and Levinson's politeness framework, on-record face-threatening illocutions may be moderated with mitigating strategies, which are linguistic redressive mechanisms that attenuate the strength of the adverse effect within face attack acts. Because the frequency of mitigating strategies influences the politeness degree of the speakers' communications, the number of the mitigating strategies within each on-record criticism was noted for statistical tests (Kasper 1994; Skewis 2003). With examples taken from the current database, Table 2 shows the instances of on-record criticisms and types of mitigating strategies that judges applied to attenuate the imposition of their on-record criticisms, while Table 3 illustrates the strategies for doing off-record criticisms.<sup>2</sup> Concerning supportive move, the current analysis referred to Brown and Levinson's positive and negative politeness strategies. While positive face-oriented supportive utterances manifest the judges' concern of the contestants' need to be appreciated and judges' intentions to create solidarity ties with their addressees, negative face-oriented supportive utterances denote the judges' respect and deference to their addressees. The categorizations of supportive utterances were based on the semantic meanings of the languages analyzed. Table 4 shows different supportive utterances for mitigating the criticizing illocutions with examples taken from the current database.

Table 2. On-record criticisms with and without redressive action

Redressive device	Example
<i>On-record criticism without redressive action</i>	
	tā bǐngbú shì xiàng yī jiàn zhēnzhèng de it not be like one CL real NOM shízhuāng. garment 'It is not like a real garment.'
<i>On-record criticism with redressive action</i> <sup>3</sup>	
Hedge <sup>4</sup>	
Conditional hedge	<u>zhège</u> shèjì rúguǒ zài nǐ zhège ānpái de bùfèn, this design if at you this arrange ASSOC part

<sup>2</sup> In Brown and Levinson's (1987) study of linguistic politeness, various mitigating mechanisms for attenuating on-record criticisms and several types of off-record strategies for doing indirect face attack acts have been presented. However, Table 2 and Table 3 only show the mitigating devices and off-record strategies found in the current database.

<sup>3</sup> The redressive devices applied to the on-record criticisms in Table 2 are underlined.

<sup>4</sup> In Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, hedges involve three major categories, including *conditional hedge*, *hedge addressed to politeness strategies* and *hedges addressed to Grice's Maxims*.

	qíshí shì shībài de, shì bù chénggōng de. actually EMP fail NOM EMP not succeed NOM 'If the design is arranged in the place where you arrange, it actually fails, it is not successful.'
Hedge addressed to politeness strategies <sup>5</sup>	wǒ bìxū shuō nǐ duìyú táiwān nǚrén de xíngxiàng I have to say you for Taiwan women ASSOC image de quánshì zhēnde tài báoruò le. ASSOC interpretation really too weak PFV 'I have to say that your interpretation of the characteristics of Taiwanese women is really too weak.'
Hedge addressed to Grice's Maxims <sup>6</sup>	
Quality hedge <sup>7</sup>	hǎoxiàng zhè yīfú bù shìhé tā. seemingly this garment not suit her 'It seems that this garment is not suitable for her.'
Quantity hedge <sup>8</sup>	wǒ zhǐ néng shuō nǐ zài suǒyǒu de xìjiē I only can say you at all ASSOC detail chǔlǐ shàng dōu tài cūcāo. handle above all too crude 'All I can say is that all of the details were crudely made.'
Manner hedge <sup>9</sup>	hǎoxiàng tā chuān le jiějie de yīfú; wǒ de seem she wear PFV big sister GEN clothes I GEN yìsī jiùshìshuō zhè yàng shāowēi guòyú chéngshú meaning namely this way a little bit too mature le yīdiǎn. PFV a bit 'It seemed that she was wearing her sister's clothes. What I was trying to say is that (she appeared) a bit too mature.'
Imposition minimizer <sup>10</sup>	tā gěi wǒmen de jīngxǐ yǒudiǎn xiǎo. it give we NOM surprise a little bit small 'The surprise it gave us is a little bit small.'

<sup>5</sup> Hedges to politeness strategies found in this database are *qíshí* 'in fact', *rúguǒ jiǎng bǐjiào zhíjiē yìdiǎn dehuà* 'if to say it more directly', *wǒ bìxū shuō* 'I must say', *wǒ bìxū yào shuō* 'I must say', and *tǎnbái shuō* 'frankly speaking'.

<sup>6</sup> Hedges addressed to Grice's Maxims include quality hedge, quantity hedge, manner hedge, and relevance hedge. In this corpus, no relevance hedge was found; therefore, no example was provided. The reason why the judges did not use relevance hedge to redress their criticisms should be attributed to their responsibility in the talent competitions. While giving negative commentaries in talent shows, it is unlikely for the judges to use relevance hedge to wander off into other subject matters in order to avoid imposing on their addressees, thus accounting for the absence of relevance hedge in the current database.

<sup>7</sup> Quality hedges found in this database include *wǒ juéde* 'I feel', *hǎoxiàng* 'seem', *kěnéng* 'maybe', *gǎnjué* 'feel', *wǒ xiǎng* 'I think', *yīnggāi* 'should', *huáiyí* 'doubt', *sìhū* 'seem', *kànqílái* 'look like', *duì wǒ lái jiǎng* 'to me' and *duì wǒ lái shuō* 'to me'.

<sup>8</sup> In this corpus, quantity hedges involve *bǐjiào* 'relatively', *jīběnshàng* 'basically', *wǒ háishì zhǐ néng shuō* 'all I can say is that...', and *jiǎndān shuō* 'to state it briefly'.

<sup>9</sup> *Wǒ de yìsī jiùshìshuō* 'what I was trying to say is that...' is the manner hedge found in the present database.

<sup>10</sup> Imposition minimizers found in the present database are *yìdiǎn* 'a bit', *yìdiǎndiǎn* 'a little bit', *wéiyī* 'only', *yìxiē* 'some', *shāowéi yìdiǎndiǎn* 'a tiny little bit', and *shāowēi yǒu diǎn* 'a tiny little bit'.

Point-of-view distancing	<u>píngshěn ne yě yízhì rènwéi</u> nǐ even zhèyàng <i>judge P also consistently think you such</i> de shèjì dōu háishì too much. <i>NOM design even still</i> 'In fact, <u>all of the judges consistently agreed</u> that even such design is still too much.'
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Table 3. Strategies for doing off-record criticisms

Off-record strategy	Example
Rhetorical question	wèishíme A duàn yīdìng yào chàng zhème yònglì <i>why section must want sing so forcefully</i> liě? <i>Q</i> 'Why must you sing the section A so forcefully?'
Hint	qíshí nǐ yīnggāi kěyǐ chàng dé hěn hǎo. <i>actually you should be able to sing CSC very well</i> 'Actually, you should have been able to sing very well.'
Metaphor	nǐ chànggē xūyào qù zuò yìdiǎn jiànkāngjiǎnchá <i>you singing must to do some health check</i> ou. <i>FW</i> 'Your singing needs to have some health checks.'
Ellipsis	jīntiān zhè ge fúhuāng qíshí yǒu yìdiǎn... <i>today this CL garment actually have a little bit</i> 'The garment of today is actually a little bit...'
Understatement	jīntiān wǒ juéde Ài Yí-Liáng qíshí méiyǒu gěi wǒ <i>today I feel (proper name) actually not give I</i> tài duō de surprise. <i>too much NOM</i> 'Actually, I felt Ài Yí-Liáng did not give me a lot of surprise today.'

Table 4. Supportive moves in criticizing events<sup>11</sup>

Supportive move	Example
<i>Positive face-oriented</i>	
Giving praise	<u>qíshí měi cì biǎoyǎn dōu hěn nǔlì</u> <i>actually every time performance all very hardworking</i> <u>yě hěn yòng lì, dànshì wǒ yìzhí juéde nǐ zài</u> <i>also very use power but I always feel you at</i> táishàng bú gòu fāngsōng. <i>stage not enough relaxed</i> ' <u>Actually, (you) have been hardworking and have been doing your best during every performance</u> , yet I always feel that you were not relaxed enough on the stage.'
Giving reason	wǒ wéiyī juéde shì gē tài cháng le; yīnwèi <i>I only feel EMP song too long PFV because</i> <u>qíshí nǐ chàng tài duō le, yuè dào hòumiàn</u> <i>actually you sing too much PFV the more to back</i> <u>ne qíshí huì zuò bù chū gěng lái.</u> <i>P actually will do not out surprise come</i> 'In my opinion, the song was too long. That is because, in fact, <u>(if) you sing too much, it is not easy to have surprise at the end (of the performance), actually.</u> '
Giving suggestion	wǒ juéde nàge dǒuyīn yǒu yìdiǎn lǎopài ou. <i>I feel that vibrato have a little bit old-fashioned FW</i>

<sup>11</sup> The supportive utterances in the instances are underlined.



	<p>nǐ kěnéng yào xiū yìxiē.  <i>you may need modify a little bit</i>                  ‘I felt that vibrato was a little bit old-fashioned. <u>You may need to modify (it) a little bit.</u>’</p>
Conveying commiseration	<p>díquè nǐ fāng zài zhège zǔhé lǐmiàn shì  <i>indeed you put at this combination inside EMP</i>  <u>yǒuyidiǎn chīkuǎide,</u> suǒyǐ xiāngjiǎzhīxià nǐ de  <i>a little bit disadvantageous so comparatively you GEN</i>                  bùfèn huì bǐjiào ruò.  <i>section would relatively weak</i>                  ‘<u>Indeed, you were at disadvantage while being arranged in this combination.</u> So, in comparison (with other contestants), you appeared weaker.’</p>
Giving encouragement	<p>pīnjiē zài yìqǐ de shíhòu kànqǐlái jiù huì  <i>put together at together NOM moment look then would</i>                  bǐjiào bùwánzhěng; zhè liǎng gè dōngxī rúguǒ qù  <i>relatively incomplete these two CL things if go</i>  <u>kèfú,</u> yǐhòu wǒ xiāngxìn dōngxī huì yuèláiyuèhǎo,  <i>overcome later I believe things would better and better</i>  <u>jiāyóu.</u>  <i>cheers</i>                  ‘When (all the pieces) were put together, the entire look appeared somewhat incomplete. <u>If you can overcome these two difficulties, I believe that things will get better and better in the future. Cheers.</u>’</p>
Showing approval	<p>nǐ jīntiān jìshù céngmiàn méi yǒu wèntí, kěshì  <i>you today technique aspect not have problem but</i>                  zài cosplay de chuàngyì gēn jīngxǐ liàngdiǎn, wǒ  <i>at ASSOC creativity with surprise highlight I</i>                  gèrén juéde tài shǎo le.  <i>personally feel too deficient PFV</i>                  ‘<u>There was no problem with your (singing) technique today.</u> But, I personally felt that the creativities and highlights in your cosplay were too restricted.’</p>
Joking	<p>wǒ juéde nǐ jiùshì gǎnjué nàgè jiǔ hē de bú  <i>I feel you PM feel PM wine drink CSC not</i>  <u>tài gòu,</u> yǒudiǎn jūjǐn.  <i>too enough a little bit overcautious</i>                  ‘<u>I felt that you did not drink enough;</u> (you appeared) somewhat overcautious.’</p>
<i>Negative face-oriented</i>	
Giving apology	<p>duìbùqǐ. zhège wǒ zhí shuō; nǐ mǎn tèbié, dànshì  <i>sorry PM I directly say you rather special but</i>                  nǐ zhuā pāizi hái zhuā bú tài dào.  <i>you catch tempo still catch not too to</i>                  ‘<u>Sorry.</u> Well, I’ll say it directly; you are rather special but you still can not follow the tempo very well.’</p>

In this study, the statistical analyses were implemented after the qualitative analyses of the collected data. The quantitative analyses were to verify if there exists any statistical significant correlation between the judges’ used of politeness strategies and the gender identities of the judges and the contestants. The statistical analyses utilized in the current research included manual calculations and one-way ANOVA. In the ANOVA analyses, the mean scores of the politeness strategies used in the following four groups were compared, including male judges to male contestants (M-to-M dyads), male judges to female contestants (M-to-F dyads), female judges to female contestants (F-to-F dyads) and female judges to male contestants (F-to-M dyads). When the results

of analyses of variance were positive, the Scheffé post hoc tests were used for pairwise comparison of the subgroups, aiming to verify if the gender identity of the judges or the gender identity of the contestants is significantly correlated to the linguistic politeness behavior of the judges. In this research, I used an alpha level of 0.05 for all statistical tests.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Frequencies of on-record and off-record criticisms

Table 5. Types of criticism according to the judges' and contestants' gender roles

Dyad	Male judge to male contestant (M-to-M)	Male judge to female contestant (M-to-F)	Female judge to female contestant (F-to-F)	Female judge to male contestant (F-to-M)	Total
On-record criticism without redressive action (18.57%)					
Number	30	43	43	55	171
Mean	0.28	0.40	0.40	0.51	1.58
SD	0.54	0.72	0.63	0.85	1.43
On-record criticism with redressive action (51.68%)					
Number	130	119	119	108	476
Mean	1.20	1.10	1.10	1.00	4.41
SD	1.49	1.27	1.31	1.38	2.90
Off-record criticism (29.75%)					
Number	74	68	63	69	274
Mean	0.69	0.63	0.58	0.64	2.54
SD	0.95	0.95	0.89	1.19	1.92
Total (100%)					
Number	234	230	225	232	921
Mean	2.17	2.13	2.08	2.15	8.53
SD	2.27	2.08	2.23	2.64	4.92

Table 6. ANOVA results of on-record and off-record criticisms

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
On-record criticism without redressive action					
Between group	2.896	3	.965	2.001	.113
Within group	206.417	428	.482		
Total	209.313	431			
On-record criticism with redressive action					
Between group	2.241	3	.747	.400	.753
Within group	799.278	428	1.867		
Total	801.519	431			
Off-record criticism					
Between group	.565	3	.188	.188	.905
Within group	429.648	428	1.004		
Total	430.213	431			

As Table 5 shows, from the 108 episodes of the talent contest analyzed, 921 tokens of

criticizing instances were obtained, including 171 tokens of on-record criticism without redressive action, 476 tokens of on-record criticism with redressive action(s), and 274 tokens of off-record criticism. Analyses of variance were conducted to verify if the judges' selections of criticizing strategies were correlated to the judges' and the contestants' gender identities. Concerning *on-record criticism without redressive action*, results indicated that the judges' use of direct criticisms did not vary significantly in terms of the judges' and the contestants' gender identities [ $F(3,428)=2.00, p=.113$ ]. The negative result was also obtained in the variance analyses of *on-record criticism with redressive action* [ $F(3,428)=.40, p=.753$ ]. Specifically, there existed no statistically considerable correlation between the judges' employment of redressed on-record criticisms and the gender identities of the judges and the contestants. Likewise, there was no remarkable correlation between the judges' use of off-record strategies and the gender roles of the judges and the contestants [ $F(3,428)=.18, p=.905$ ]. Detailed ANOVA results are presented in Table 6.

Table 7. Off-record criticisms according to the judges' and contestants' gender roles

Dyad	Male judge to male contestant (M-to-M)	Male judge to female contestant (M-to-F)	Female judge to female contestant (F-to-F)	Female judge to male contestant (F-to-M)	Total
Hint (49.64%)					
Number	37	33	30	36	136
Mean	0.34	0.31	0.28	0.33	1.26
SD	0.58	0.60	0.56	0.92	1.48
Ellipsis (2.19%)					
Number	0	2	1	3	6
Mean	0	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.06
SD	0	0.14	0.10	0.21	0.27
Understatement (30.29%)					
Number	19	14	28	22	83
Mean	0.18	0.13	0.26	0.20	0.77
SD	0.54	0.39	0.50	0.47	0.93
Metaphor (7.66%)					
Number	10	9	1	1	21
Mean	0.09	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.19
SD	0.35	0.31	0.10	0.10	0.48
Rhetorical question (10.22%)					
Number	8	10	3	7	28
Mean	0.07	0.09	0.03	0.06	0.26
SD	0.26	0.32	0.17	0.31	0.57
Total (100%)					
Number	74	68	63	69	274
Mean	0.69	0.63	0.58	0.64	2.54
SD	0.95	0.95	0.89	1.19	1.92

Although no significant correlation was established between the judges' use of off-record criticisms and the judges' gender role or the participants' gender role, the analyses of variance were conducted to inspect if the judges' selection of different off-record strategies was related to the judges' or the contestants' gender identities. Among those devices, the statistical test of *metaphor* yielded a positive result [ $F(3,428)=3.79, p=.01$ ]; however, no statistically significant difference between the mean scores was found in the Scheffé pairwise comparisons. The analyses of the other

off-record devices, however, revealed statistically insignificant correlation. Namely, the judges' use of indirect strategies was not significantly related to the gender identity of the judges or the gender identity of the contestants (*hint* [ $F(3,428)=.19, p=.897$ ], *ellipsis* [ $F(3,428)=.83, p=.473$ ], *understatement* [ $F(3,428)=1.38, p=.247$ ], *rhetorical question* [ $F(3,428)=1.07, p=.359$ ]). Table 7 shows the frequencies of off-record strategies according to the judges' and the contestants' gender identities. Detailed ANOVA results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. ANOVA results of the off-record criticisms

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Hint</b>					
Between group	.278	3	.093	.199	.897
Within group	198.907	428	.465		
Total	199.185	431			
<b>Ellipsis</b>					
Between group	.046	3	.015	.839	.473
Within group	7.870	428	.018		
Total	7.917	431			
<b>Understatement</b>					
Between group	.951	3	.317	1.384	.247
Within group	98.102	428	.229		
Total	99.053	431			
<b>Metaphor</b>					
Between group	.674	3	.225	3.798	.010*
Within group	25.306	428	.059		
Total	25.979	431			
<b>Rhetorical</b>					
Between group	.241	3	.080	1.075	.359
Within group	31.944	428	.075		
Total	32.185	431			

\* $p < .05$ 

### 3.2. Frequencies of redressive devices in on-record criticisms

Table 9. Redressive devices according to the judges' and contestants' gender roles

Dyad	Male judge to male contestant (M-to-M)	Male judge to female contestant (M-to-F)	Female judge to female contestant (F-to-F)	Female judge to male contestant (F-to-M)	Total
<b>Hedge (69.66%)</b>					
Number	154	154	141	148	597
Mean	1.16	1.21	1.27	1.41	1.25
SD	0.72	0.82	1.01	1.06	0.90
<b>Imposition minimizer (26.37%)</b>					
Number	65	57	52	52	226
Mean	0.49	0.45	0.47	0.50	0.48
SD	0.61	0.63	0.70	0.64	0.64
<b>Point-of-view distancing (3.97%)</b>					
Number	7	8	10	9	34
Mean	0.05	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.07
SD	0.22	0.27	0.29	0.28	0.27
<b>Total (100%)</b>					
Number	226	219	203	209	857

Mean	1.70	1.72	1.83	1.99	1.80
SD	0.98	0.97	1.10	1.24	1.07

As Table 9 shows, the redressive device in the present database amounted to 857 tokens in total, including 597 tokens of *hedge*, 226 tokens of *imposition minimizer*, and 34 tokens of *point-of-view distancing*. The overall frequencies of the redressive devices were higher in the criticisms addressed by male judges to male and female contestants. Yet, the statistical results from the analyses of variance yielded no significant correlation between the judges' use of redressive devices and judges' gender role or the contestants' gender role (*hedge* [ $F(3,472)=1.65$ ,  $p=.176$ ], *imposition minimizer* [ $F(3,472)=.12$ ,  $p=.934$ ], *point-of-view distancing* [ $F(3,472)=.54$ ,  $p=.651$ ]). Detailed ANOVA results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. ANOVA results of redressive devices

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Hedge</b>					
Between group	4.015	3	1.338	1.653	.176
Within group	382.226	472	.810		
Total	386.242	475			
<b>Imposition minimizer</b>					
Between group	.160	3	.053	.129	.943
Within group	194.538	472	.412		
Total	194.697	475			
<b>Point-of-view distancing</b>					
Between group	.116	3	.039	.546	.651
Within group	33.455	472	.071		
Total	33.571	475			

### 3.3. Frequencies of supportive utterances

As shown in Table 11, 1,654 tokens of supportive moves were identified in the current database. Results of analyses of variance manifested that although the judges' gender role or the contestants' gender role had no considerable correlation with the judges' use of *showing approval* [ $F(3, 917)=.61$ ,  $p=.605$ ] and *giving apology* [ $F(3, 917)=.67$ ,  $p=.569$ ], it did have a statistically significant correlation with the judges' use of *giving praise* [ $F(3, 917)=13.36$ ,  $p=.000$ ], *giving reason* [ $F(3, 917)=3.73$ ,  $p=.011$ ], *giving suggestion* [ $F(3, 917)=4.84$ ,  $p=.002$ ], *conveying commiseration* [ $F(3, 917)=7.74$ ,  $p=.000$ ], *giving encouragement* [ $F(3, 917)=6.92$ ,  $p=.000$ ], and *joking* [ $F(3, 917)=8.06$ ,  $p=.000$ ]. Detailed ANOVA results are shown in Table 12.

Results of Scheffé test of *giving praise* indicated that there existed a remarkable difference between the mean scores of the M-to-M dyad ( $M=0.84$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) and F-to-M dyad ( $M=0.57$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ) and between the mean scores of the M-to-F dyad ( $M=0.78$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ) and F-to-F dyad ( $M=0.52$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ), suggesting that male judges used more compliments to redress their critical remarks than female judges did. Concerning *giving reason*, the mean score of the F-to-F dyad ( $M=0.56$ ,  $SD=0.50$ ) was shown to be

considerably higher than that of the M-to-F dyad ( $M=0.41$ ,  $SD=0.50$ ), implying that female judges gave more reasons to account for their critical commentaries than male judges did. Regarding *giving suggestion*, the statistically significant difference lay between the mean scores of the M-to-M dyad ( $M=0.38$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ) and F-to-M dyad ( $M=0.25$ ,  $SD=0.44$ ), indicating that male judges provided more suggestions to their addressees than female judges did. As for *conveying commiseration*, the considerable difference was found between the mean scores of the M-to-F dyad ( $M=0.21$ ,  $SD=0.43$ ) and F-to-F dyad ( $M=0.07$ ,  $SD=0.27$ ), implying that male judges expressed sympathy to their addressees more often than female judges did. Concerning *giving encouragement*, the post hoc comparison between the mean scores of the M-to-F dyad ( $M=0.14$ ,  $SD=0.34$ ) and F-to-F dyad ( $M=0.03$ ,  $SD=0.16$ ) yielded a statistically significant result, indicating that male judges inspired the contestants with courage, spirit, and/or confidence more frequently than female judges did. As for *joking*, the statistical significance lay between the mean scores of the M-to-M dyad ( $M=0.07$ ,  $SD=0.25$ ) and F-to-M dyad ( $M=0.004$ ,  $SD=0.07$ ) and between the mean scores of the M-to-F dyad ( $M=0.05$ ,  $SD=0.24$ ) and F-to-F dyad ( $M=0$ ,  $SD=0$ ), showing that male judges utilized jokes to attenuate their criticisms more often than female judges did.

In brief, the judges' gender identity was statistically related to their application of supportive utterances while doing criticism in reality talent shows on TV. In general, male judges had a propensity to utilize more supportive utterances to moderate their critical remarks than female judges did. However, no significant correlation was established between the gender identity of the contestants and the judges' employment of supportive utterances.

Table 11. Supportive utterances according to the judges' and contestants' gender roles

Dyad	Male judge to male contestant (M-to-M)	Male judge to female contestant (M-to-F)	Female judge to female contestant (F-to-F)	Female judge to male contestant (F-to-M)	Total
Giving praise (38.03%)					
Number	199	188	114	128	629
Mean	0.84	0.78	0.52	0.57	0.68
SD	0.67	0.71	0.64	0.59	0.67
Giving reason (28.17%)					
Number	126	100	123	117	466
Mean	0.53	0.41	0.56	0.52	0.51
SD	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Giving suggestion (16.93%)					
Number	89	83	52	56	280
Mean	0.38	0.34	0.24	0.25	0.30
SD	0.51	0.51	0.44	0.44	0.48
Conveying commiseration (7.74%)					
Number	40	51	15	22	128
Mean	0.17	0.21	0.07	0.10	0.14
SD	0.38	0.43	0.27	0.33	0.36
Giving encouragement (4.66%)					
Number	24	33	6	14	77
Mean	0.10	0.14	0.03	0.06	0.08
SD	0.30	0.34	0.16	0.24	0.28
Showing approval (2.42%)					
Number	8	14	9	9	40
Mean	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.04

SD	0.18	0.23	0.20	0.20	0.20
Joking (1.75%)					
Number	16	12	0	1	29
Mean	0.07	0.05	0	0.004 <sup>12</sup>	0.03
SD	0.25	0.24	0	0.07	0.18
Giving apology (0.30%)					
Number	2	2	1	0	5
Mean	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.005	0.01
SD	0.09	0.09	0.07	0	0.07
Total (100%)					
Number	504	483	320	347	1,654
Mean	2.14	2.00	1.45	1.56	1.80
SD	1.19	1.23	0.91	0.97	1.12

Table 12. ANOVA results of supportive utterances

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Giving praise					
Between group	17.155	3	5.718	13.368	.000*
Within group	392.267	917	.428		
Total	409.422	920			
Giving reason					
Between group	2.825	3	.942	3.732	.011*
Within group	231.392	917	.252		
Total	234.217	920			
Giving suggestion					
Between group	3.322	3	1.107	4.845	.002*
Within group	209.553	917	.229		
Total	212.875	920			
Conveying commiseration					
Between group	2.971	3	.990	7.747	.000*
Within group	117.239	917	.128		
Total	120.211	920			
Giving encouragement					
Between group	1.564	3	.521	6.927	.000*
Within group	68.999	917	.075		
Total	70.562	920			
Showing approval					
Between group	.077	3	.026	.616	.605
Within group	38.186	917	.042		
Total	38.263	920			
Joking					
Between group	.774	3	.258	8.067	.000*
Within group	29.313	917	.032		
Total	30.087	920			
Giving apology					
Between group	.011	3	.004	.673	.569

<sup>12</sup> Since the number of *joking* in the F-to-M dyad was too small, three decimal places were used.

Within group	4.962	917	.005
Total	4.973	920	

\* $p < .05$ .

#### 4. Discussions

This study scrutinized the correlation between judges' linguistic politeness behavior and gender identities of the judges and the contestants by analyzing male and female judges' management of criticisms in the context of reality talent shows on TV. This study hypothesized that (1) the judges' linguistic politeness behavior should have no remarkable correlation with their gender identity due to the symmetrical social hierarchy of the male and female judges in the talent contests but (2) there should be a statistically significant relationship between the judges' linguistic politeness behavior and the gender identity of the contestants. What follow are discussions of the findings.

##### 4.1. *Gender of the addressers*

This research first hypothesized that politeness strategies used by male and female judges while doing criticisms should have no difference due to their symmetrical power positions in the judges' panel of reality talent shows. Results, however, were contrary to our expectation. Specifically, there existed a statistically significant correlation between the judges' gender identity and their application of mitigating utterances. Why the results of the current study were different from the findings of Brouwer et al. (1979) and Brouwer (1982)? First, the inconsistent findings of our investigations should be attributed to the different speech events in the different speech contexts analyzed. In Brouwer's research, the speech event of buying train ticket was targeted for examination, which involves no face-threatening consequence, and the conversations between ticket-sellers and ticket-buyers were not closely monitored by many others. Therefore, it is unlikely that speakers would pay special attention to their use of polite languages while interacting with their addressees. However, the speech event of criticizing analyzed in the present research is highly destructive to the addressees' face and the criticisms were delivered in the media discourse. It is, therefore, not surprising that speakers would be particularly attentive to their linguistic politeness behaviors while expressing their critical commentaries, thus leading to the asymmetrical communication patterns of male and female judges. The other contributing factor for the inconsistent findings of Brouwer's researches and the current research should be attributed to the different social hierarchical rankings of the addressers and the addressees. In Brouwer's researches, ticket-sellers and ticket-buyers were in a similar social hierarchy in the context of business transaction; none of them should be particularly cautious on their linguistic politeness behaviors. Yet, the judges and the contestants in the talent shows are hierarchically asymmetrical; specifically, the judges are of greater expert power than the contestants. Because of the judges and the contestants' power asymmetry, the judges in the higher power position would be particularly careful of their language choices while criticizing the contestants in the lower power position, thus contributing to the significant variation between the male judges' and female judges' communication styles.



From the results of this study, we not only evidenced that the judges' gender was significantly related to their linguistic politeness behavior in TV reality talent shows, but we also noticed that male judges utilized more mitigating utterances to soften their criticizing illocutions than female judges did. Obviously, there exists a conflict between the finding of this study and that of substantial relevant investigations where it has been often documented that women tend to be linguistically more polite than men due to women's relatively lower social hierarchy in the societies (Brown 1980; Brown & Levinson 1987; Coates 1996; Goodwin 1980; Haas 1979; Holmes 1989, 1993a, 1993b, 1995; Ide et al. 1986; Lakoff 1975; Reid 1995). The reason why male judges utilized more politeness strategies while doing criticisms in this study should be due greatly to the fact that linguistic politeness behaviors do not always denote powerless (Holmes 1995; Lakoff 1975). In the context under the current investigation, politeness strategies can be socializing mechanisms used by the judges to frame themselves as the ones with greater authority power than the contestants. That is because in the evaluative communications, politeness devices are for mitigating negative commentaries, which are addressed downwards from the superiors to the subordinates. As politeness strategies are utilized as status-enhancing devices, especially in the public situational context, it is scarcely surprising that male judges incorporated more polite strategies in their criticizing communications than their female counterparts did. In the literature, it has been widely demonstrated that men incline to emphasize the referential functions of their utterances and regard public speaking a great opportunity to assert their social superiority; in contrast, women have a tendency to focus more on the affective function of their utterances and therefore, tend to talk less than men do in public situations, such as conferences, formal meetings, seminars, and television discussions (Bashiruddin et al. 1990; Edelsky & Adams 1990; DeFrancisco 1998; Fishman 1978; Holmes 1988, 1992, 1995; O'Barr & Atkins 1980; Swacker 1979; Tannen 1990; West 2010; West & Zimmerman 1983; Zimmerman & West 1975).

Extensive literature on language and gender has noted that there exists a tendency that women are more polite than men because women often utilize utterances that are commonly associated with powerless and politeness, such as *hedging* and *apologies* (Brown 1980; Coates 1996; Holmes 1993a, 1993b, 1995; Johnstone et al. 1992; Lakoff 1973). However, languages of female judges in the current corpus are not as soft as previously believed to be the case. Specifically, female judges did not go off-record more frequently nor utilized more mitigating utterances to moderate their direct critical remarks than male judges did. Such unanticipated outcome might result from the female judges' intentionality to assert their professional identity in the mixed-gender judges' panel. Like many Asian societies, women in the Chinese cultural context generally enjoy less social power than men do. When women and men were assigned the same role in the judges' panel of reality talent shows, it seemed possible that women had an attempt to show others that they, in fact, had the same expert power as that of men. Since people's power and status can be manifested through the language they use, female judges avoided overusing indirect speeches and mitigations, which often denote powerless, while doing criticisms. In the current database, *giving reason* is the only mitigating strategy that was more frequently utilized by female judges than male judges. By providing reasons to account for their negative commentaries towards the contestants, female judges not only moderated the illocutionary force of their utterances but they also demonstrated their expertise to the public and strengthened their authority

power in the cross-gender situational context.

The ANOVA results in Section 3.1 and 3.2 indicated that there was no significant gender difference between the male judges' and the female judges' communication patterns while mitigating the head acts of the criticizing events. Instead, the stylistic variations between the male judges' and the female judges' linguistic politeness behaviors were substantially manifested through the supportive utterances at the discourse level. The results of the current research corresponded to findings of extensive earlier studies on Chinese linguistic politeness. Specifically, a bulk of prior studies has documented that in Chinese communications, supportive utterance is the better favored mitigation for showing one's politeness, compared with redressive mechanism applied to the core illocutionary act of a speech event (Færch & Kasper 1989; Scollon & Wong-Scollon 1991; Skewis 2003; Yu, 1995, 1999; Zhang 1995). Yu (2005, 1999) in his studies has further asserted that Chinese speakers' preference of external modifier at the discourse level over internal modifier within the head act is even stronger when the degree of imposition of the speakers' communication on their addressees is rather high, sufficiently accounting for the findings of the current investigation into the highly offensive speech event of criticism.

#### **4.2 Gender of the addressees**

Brouwer et al. (1979) and Brouwer (1982) argued that the addressees' gender is a critical determinant to male and female speakers' linguistic stylistic variation when they were in a symmetrical hierarchical status. Nevertheless, results of this study yielded no statistical significant correlation between the gender of the addressees and the politeness behavior of the male and female judges, contradicting the second hypothesis. Such unanticipated outcome should be attributed to the different speech contexts where the data were elicited for investigation in Brouwer's researches and the current study. In Brouwer's researches, polite languages were collected from ticket-buyers and ticket-sellers' communications in context of buying train tickets. Generally, speakers would not be accused of gender discrimination simply due to their politeness variations in the business transaction. Nevertheless, the current study focused specifically on male and female judges' negative commentaries extracted from evaluative communications in reality talent contests on TV. As members of the evaluation panel, the judges should impartially express their opinions, either positive or negative, based on the performances of their contestants. Had the judges' evaluation communications had a detectable bias towards either male or female addressees, their authorities and social images would have been damaged, at least to a certain degree. Therefore, in order to safeguard their professional identities and avoid being accused of gender discrimination, the judges managed to have their commentaries not be influenced by the gender role of their addressees, thus resulting in the insignificant impact of the addressees' gender identity on the judges' communication variations in the current study.

In brief, the present study empirically evidenced that people's perception of politeness strategies and the situational information of a particular speech context may impose significant impacts on their linguistic politeness behavior.

## 5. Conclusions

This study scrutinized male and female judges' pragmalinguistic approaches to criticisms based on evaluative communications collected from reality talent shows on TV, aiming to explore the relationship between the judges' linguistic politeness behavior and the gender identities of the judges and the contestants. Based on the findings of Brouwer's studies (1979, 1982), this study hypothesized that the gender identity of the judges is not correlated to their application of polite strategies, while the gender identity of the contestants is related to the judges' linguistic politeness behavior. However, contrary to the hypotheses, the ANOVA results indicated no correlation between the gender role of the contestants and the judges' communication patterns, while the judges' gender identity was significantly related to their application of supportive utterances; specifically, male judges utilized more mitigating speeches than their female counterparts did. The implication to emerge from the results is that how people perceive the function of politeness strategies in a specific situational context may influence their linguistic politeness behavior to a considerable degree. Consequently, there should be no one-to-one correspondence between one's gender identity and their use of polite strategies. Moreover, in the speech contexts where male and female speakers are in an equal power position, the speakers' communication style is not always correlated to the gender role of their addressees. Instead, the contextual factors are even more critical to people's linguistic variations than their addressees' gender identity.

Although this body of research has the undeniable merit of offering valuable insights into the correlation between language and gender, it still has some limitations. In the present corpus, on-record criticisms greatly outnumbered off-record criticisms. Consequently, the numbers of certain off-record strategies were too restricted to yield results with strong statistical power, including the strategies of *ellipsis*, *metaphor*, and *rhetorical question*. The same restriction was also found in the redressive device of *point-of-view distancing* and the supportive utterances of *joking*, *showing approval*, and *giving apology*. In the future, more investigations into the correlation between these politeness strategies and the gender identities of addressers and addressees should be pursued. In addition, while analyzing data for the current research, it was noticed that the judges sometimes suspended their communications before their realizations of criticisms. The critics' vocal hesitations indicated their reluctance to reveal their antagonism, thus implying their attentiveness to their addressees' face needs (Holmes 1984; Ng & Bradac 1993). The same phenomenon was also noted by Tanaka (2009) in her investigation of disagreement based on the data extracted from television interviews. However, the current research specifically focused on the speakers' use of linguistic politeness devices. Their employment of phonological strategies to redress the illocutionary force of the face-threatening utterances was beyond the scope of this paper, which, thus, could be explored in further investigations.

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## Appendix (Abbreviations in the glosses)

ASSOC    associative  
CL        classifier

EMP	emphatic
FW	friendly warning
GEN	genitive
NOM	nominalizer
PFV	perfective aspect
PM	pause marker
P	particle
Q	interrogative marker