On the relationship between students' politeness and respect and teachers' scoring in the classrooms

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Abstract. Politeness and respect can have serious effects on student-student as well as student-teacher relationships. In spite of undeniable importance of the relationship between students' politeness and respect with teachers' scoring, this relationship has been taken for granted in the previous research. Therefore, the presents study intended to investigate the relationship between students' respect and politeness and the scores they receive from teachers. Findings revealed that there was significant relationship among students of three different educational levels (BA, MA and Ph.D.) and teachers' scoring in terms of students' politeness and respect. Also, it was further revealed that there was significant relationship between male and female students and teachers' scoring in terms of students' politeness and respect.

 Keywords: respect and politeness, classroom, student and teacher, score

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1. INTRODUCTION

Classrooms consist of behaviors that teachers consider as learning, paying attention, listening, speaking, being on task, contributing to a discussion, responding to a question and other academic displays (Cazden, 1988; Gee, 2004; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; McDermott& Gospodinoff, 1979;Varenne & McDermott, 1998). In order for these behaviors to have a good flow in the classroom, teacher-student relationship must be taken into account simply because it is very important for students. A positive relationship between student and teacher is difficult to establish, but can be found for both individuals at either end. The qualities for a positive relationship can vary to set a learning experience approachable and inviting the students to learn. A teacher and student who have the qualities of good communications, *respect* in a classroom, and show interest in teaching from the point of view of the teacher and learning from a student will establish a positive relationship in the classroom.

The key is that teachers need to continuously monitor the student in order for him or her to be aware of any difficulties the student is having. Understanding the student's problem, fear, or confusion will give the teacher a better understanding the student's learning difficulties. Once the teacher becomes aware of the problems, he or she will be more patient with the student, thus making the student feel secure or less confused when learning is taking place in the classroom. Therefore the desirable communication in this case will be established between teacher and students.

The communication between the student and the teacher serves as a connection between the two, which provides a better atmosphere for a classroom environment. Of course a teacher is not going to understand every problem for every child in his or her classroom, but will acquire enough information for those students who are struggling with specific tasks. A significant body

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of research indicates that "academic achievement and student behavior are influenced by the quality of the teacher and student relationship" (Jones, 1981, p. 95). The more the teacher connects or communicates with his or her students, the more likely they will be able to help students learn at a high level and accomplish quickly. In this case, a good sense of *politeness* and *respect* will be established for both teachers and students.

The teacher needs to understand that in many schools, especially in big cities, students come from different cultures and backgrounds. A teacher then needs to understand the value of the students' senses of belonging, which can be of greater value and build self-worth for minority students. If the teacher demonstrates an understanding of the student's culture, it will provide a better understanding of the notions of respect and politeness for both the teacher and specially the student because students from different cultures will grasp these two notions differently. Those teachers who demonstrate *respect* towards their students automatically win favor by having active learners in their classroom. The arrogant or offensive teacher will lack these positive qualities due to his or her lack of control over the students. Teachers should assert that they should also be treated with *respect* and their responsibilities to ensure that students treat each other with kindness. According to the Jones (1981), "teachers are encouraged to blend their warmth and firmness towards the students in their classroom, but with realistic limits" (p.111).

Teachers who are in a classroom everyday have experienced one time or another the student(s) who are disruptive and/or find learning boring. Teachers understand that if this behavior continues in the classroom and if they do nothing to prevent this from happening, the outcome proves to be disastrous for both types of participants. The student will conclude that his or her behavior is permissible, and will draw away from learning and may lose *politeness* for his or her teacher; therefore it is essentially important for the teacher to explain to the student the importance of *politeness* and *respect* in the classroom that lead to the establishment of positive relationships and lively mood, which in turn lead to effective learning. Learning becomes a process for an individual where he or she feels comfortable with learning whether it's in a classroom or at home.

For teachers conducting a classroom and shaping the minds of the young students, teachers who communicate effectively with their students should give appropriate and helpful feedback to their students. Interaction between the student and teacher becomes extremely important for a successful relationship through the entire time of a school year. A close, but limited relationship between the student and teacher can be helpful for those students who are shy, and find speaking in front of the classroom difficult or children who have low self-esteem. The tension these students hold in a classroom will have the confidence they had always wanted, but never achieved due to not having a good relationship with the teacher.

Another important point is raised when those teachers who think of themselves as "*traditional*" are following the canonical approach. The traditional teachers follow the famous list of books to be read by his or her students. Many children will not enjoy reading because they do not have the background to understand the material. They do not have any interest in the book, which makes reading confusing and difficult to understand. "Students have felt what mattered most was the relationship teachers established with their students providing guidance to students who have felt inadequate or threatened" (Rose, 2000, p. 115). Teachers who follow the *traditional curriculum* do not necessarily need to focus on their traditional ideas, but rather interact with their students and find interesting topics to discuss with their students. In this kind of curriculum, following orders and respect and politeness play an important role. All the students should pay *respect* to their teacher and follow the orders in the classroom in order to have a good relationship with the teacher and efficient learning.

As can be seen from the observations of classrooms and student-teacher relationships, respect and politeness of students and also teachers are of paramount importance in order to

have good and positive relationship between students and teachers. "Goffman (1955, 1967) shed light on the concept of politeness by working on 'face'. Whenever we interact with people, we must keep both our own face and the faces that are presented to us. In this case, as Scollon and Scollon (2001) believe, making assumptions about those who we want to are very important" (Wardhaugh, 2010, p.291). For example, based on the teachers' status and roles in the classroom, we must keep in mind that what kinds of personality traits different teachers have so that we can adjust our behavior to these traits and show sufficient amount of respect to the teachers so that respectful relationship between student and teacher can be established. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face itself is defined as 'public self-image that everyone claims for himself'. Therefore, teachers' self-image deserves that they be the only authority in the classrooms and students should pay *respect* to this authority. Although the importance of *respect* and *politeness* in building positive student teacher relationships in the classrooms has been proved to anyone, there are few in any studies conducted to explore this importance specially the relationship of students' respect and teachers' grade. Therefore, the present study intended to investigate the relation of students' respect and teachers' grades.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As discussed above, in order to have effective learning in the classrooms, positive relationship between students and teacher need to be established. In order for the establishment of this relationship, there should be sense of *politeness* and *respect* between students and teachers. Students should pay *respect* to their teacher and accept teacher status as the only authority in the classroom. In this case, teacher will have a strong desire and a fresh mind to teach. However, there are few if any studies exploring the relationship between teachers' scoring and students' respect. Therefore, the present study was intended to investigate the relationship between teachers' scoring and students' respect.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any significant relationship between male and female learners and teachers' scoring in terms of students' politeness and respect?
2. Is there any significant relationship among three different educational levels (BA, MA, Ph.D) and teachers' scoring in terms of students' politeness and respect?

4. METHODOLOGY
4.1. Design

In order to seek answers for the research questions guiding this study, a quantitative research design was developed. In this respect, a survey method was employed in which a researcher-made Respect Questionnaire (RQ) was used to see whether there was any significant relationship between students' politeness and respect and teachers' scoring.

4.2. Participants

The participants of this study were 200 students of Ilam university (100 male and 100 female), who were randomly selected from BA, MA and Ph.D. students. These students were studying different majors in Ilam University. Their ages ranged from 19 to 42. They were from different regions and ethnic groups including Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian.

4.3. Instrument

The data were gathered through administering Respect Questionnaire (RQ) developed by the researchers. This questionnaire was developed in order to identify the relationships between respect of the students and teachers' scores among the variables of this study (educational levels and genders), (see Appendix A). To devise the questionnaire, 15 students were interviewed. They were asked to state their attitudes about respect to their teacher in case of teacher's role in final scores. Based on their answers, this questionnaire consists of three parts. First part itself consists of 12 items. In this part first students were asked to suppose that teacher would have an undeniable effect on final scores and then answer the items. The second part consists of 10 questions whose contents are the same as those of the first part, but this time first students were asked to suppose that teacher would not have any effect on final scores and then answer the items. The third part consists of just one item with two options which asks the students whether respect to teacher is a sociocultural affair (first option) or a personal matter (second option). As for the reliability of the questionnaire the Cronbach's alpha was applied. The Cronbach's alpha values for the first part and second part questionnaire were .79, .81 respectively.

4.4. Procedure

The obtained questionnaire was piloted with those 15 persons who were interviewed before. Based on their comments, the wording of some items was modified. All the questionnaires were distributed among the students by the researchers. One researcher was ready to answer any question about the items of questionnaire in case of misunderstanding. In response to the statements on the Respect Questionnaire (RQ), students were asked to answer the items of this questionnaire according to the two different situations. Therefore, students' answers reflected their attitudes about respect to teacher in case of teachers' direct effect on the final score or not having any effect. In order to encourage honest answers, students were ensured that they were not required to provide their names and a coding system was utilized on their particular questionnaires. In this way, data did not contain any identifiable names.

5. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of both genders for the first part of RQ. According to this table, males got the mean of (M= 29.0600) and females got the mean of (M= 27.2900). In order to see whether the difference in the mean scores for both males and females was significant or not, an Independent t-test was conducted to compare means for respect in males and females in the first part of the RQ questionnaire. As can be seen in tables 1 and 2 below, there was not a significant difference in the scores for males (M=29.0600, SD=3.62879) and females (M=27.2900, SD=2.05134) conditions; t (156.410) =35.447, p = .067.

Table 1. Mean and Standard deviation of the scores.

Group Statistics					
	gender of the participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total respect of the first part	male	100	29.0600	3.62879	.36288
	female	100	27.2900	2.05134	.20513

Table 2. independent T-test for the equality of the means between genders.

Total respect of the first part	Leven's test for the equality of the variances		t-test for equality of means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence Interval of the difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	22.863	.000	35.447	198	.067	.77000	.41685	-.05203	1.59203	
Equal variances not Assumed			35.447	156.410	.067	.77000	.41685	-.05337	1.59337	

Table 3. Frequency and Percent of the answers of genders for the First part of the RQ

	Females		Males	
	F	%	F	%
Respect	93	93	91	91

The first part of the RQ consists of 12 items which all relate to respect to teachers in case of teachers' effect on the final scores. As can be seen in Table 3, 91% of male students and 93% of female students paid respect to their teachers in case of teachers undeniable effect on the final scores.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of both genders for the second part of RQ. According to this table, males got the mean of (M= 87.9079) and females got the mean of (M= 41.0700). In order to see whether the difference in the mean scores for both males and females was significant or not, an Independent t-test was conducted to compare means for respect in males and females in the second part of the RQ questionnaire. As can be seen in tables 4 and 5 below, there was a significant difference in the scores for males (M=87.9079, SD=1.29830) and females (M=41.0700, SD=2.96564) conditions; t (161.445) =63.542, p = .000.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of the scores

Group Statistics					
	gender of the participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total respect of the second part	male	100	87.9079	1.29830	.12983
	female	100	41.0700	2.96564	.29656

Table 5. Independent T-test for the equality of the means.

Total respect of the Second part	Leven's test for the equality of the variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence Interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	18.447	.000	63.542	198	.000	123.83000	1.28331	122.41261	133.53359
Equal variances not Assumed			63.542	161.445	.000	123.83000	1.28331	122.45353	133.48237

Table 6. Frequency and Percent of the answers of genders for the Second part of the RQ

	Females		Males	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**
Respect	25	25	89	89

The second part of the RQ consists of 10 items that all relate to respect to teachers. However, this time teachers doesn't have any effect on the final scores. As can be seen in Table 6, 89% male students and 25% of female students paid respect to their teachers.

Table 7: Frequency and Percent of the answers of both genders for the third part of RQ

R23	Females		Males	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**
Option (a)	21	21	15	15
Option (b)	79	79	85	85
Total	100	100	100	100

The third part of the RQ consists of just one item with two options which asks the students whether respect to teacher is a socio-cultural affair or a personal affair. As can be seen in Table 7, most of the students chose the second option of this part (85% of male students and 79% of female students). On the other hand, only few of the students chose the first option (15% of male students and 21% of female students).

As shown in Table 8 below, one-way ANOVA was conducted to see whether there is a significant relationship between respect of students and teacher's scores among three different educational levels (BA, MA, Ph.D.) in the first and second part of RQ. There was not a statistically significant difference among educational levels in the first part of the questionnaire, but there was a statistically significant difference among levels in the second part of the questionnaire.

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA to compare means of educational levels.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total respect of the first part	Between Groups	36.799	2	18.400	2.488	.086
	Within Groups	1457.156	197	7.397		
	Total	1493.955	199			
Total respect of the second part	Between Groups	88.886	2	44.443	15.271	.000
	Within Groups	1660.989	197	8.431		
	Total	1749.875	199			

Table 9. Frequency and Percent of the answers of educational levels for the first partof RQ

	BA		MA		Ph.D	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Respect	83	96	82	91	21	93

The first part of the RQ consists of 12 items which all relate to respect to the teachers in case of teachers' effect on the final scores. As can be seen in Table 9, 96% of BA students, 91% of MA students and 93% of Ph.D students paid respect to their teachers in case of teachers' undeniable effect on final scores.

Table 10. Frequency and Percent of the answers of educational levels for the second part of RQ

	BA		MA		Ph.D	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Respect	17	20	32	36	20	89

The second part of the RQ consists of 10 items which all relate to respect to teachers. However, this time teacher doesn't have any effect on final scores. As can be seen in Table 10, 20% of BA students, 36% of MA students and 89% of Ph.D students paid respect to their teacher.

Table 11. Frequency and Percent of the answers of educational levels for the third part of RQ

R23	BA		MA		Ph.D	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Option (a)	21	23	18	20	5	22
Option (b)	67	77	72	80	18	78
Total	87	100	90	100	23	100

The third part of the RQ consists of just one item with two options which asks the students whether respect to teacher is a socio-cultural affair or a personal affair. As can be seen in Table 11, most of the students chose the second option of this part (77% of BA students, 80% of MA

students and 78% of Ph.D students). On the other hand, only few of the students chose the first option (23% of BA students, 20% of MA students and 22% of Ph.D students).

6. DISCUSSION

This study was done with the aim of investigating the relationship between respect of students and teachers' scores in the classrooms. To this end a researcher-made Respect Questionnaire which consists of three parts was used. The results showed that there was not any significant difference between male students and female students in the first part of the questionnaire. According to Tables 1 and 2, the mean score for male students was M=29.0600 and the rate of (p) was p=.067. Furthermore, according to Table 3, 91% percent of male students and 93% of female students had respect to their teacher in case of teacher's evaluation and his effect on the final scores. This corroborates the fact that both genders kept their teacher's public self-image (Goffman,1955;1967; Brown & Levinson,1987) and fulfilled their role as submissive and respectful students. However, there was a statistically significant difference between male and female students in the second part of the questionnaire. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the mean score for male students was M=87.9079 and the rate of (p) was p=.000. Also, according to the Table 6, 89% of male students and 25% of female students paid respect to their teacher. However, in this case teacher had not any effect on final scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher's lack of effect on final scores made a change in female students' rate of respect to their teacher because unlike the first part that 93% of them paid respect to their teacher in case of teacher's effect on final scores, this time only 25% of them paid respect to their teacher, so we can say that teacher's public self-image. In spite of female students, their male counterparts did not show any change in their rate of respect to teacher even if with the lack of teacher's effect on final scores.

Genders' performance on the third part also was the same as their performance on the first part. In this part, they were asked whether they believe respect to teacher is a sociocultural affair (first option) or a personal matter (second option). According to the Table 7, 85% of male students and 79% of female students believed that respect to teacher is a personal matter. That is, everybody has his or her own way and rate of respect according to his or her own personality traits.

The findings also further revealed that there was no significant difference between respect of students and teacher's scores among three educational levels in the first part of the questionnaire in case of teacher's effect on the final scores. According to Table 8, the rate of (F) was F=2.488 and the rate of (p) was p=.086. In addition, as shown in Table 9, 96% of BA students, 91% of MA students and 93% of Ph.D students paid respect to their teacher, which shows the insignificance of the difference among three educational levels. However, as can be seen in Table 8, the obtained values for F (F=15.271) and p (p=.000) corroborates the fact that there was a significant relationship between students' respect and teacher's scoring in the second part of the questionnaire in which teacher didn't have any effect on the final scores. As shown in Table 10, 20% of BA students, 36% of MA students and 89% of Ph.D students paid respect to their teacher. 20% of BA students' respect (unlike their 96% in the first part of the RQ) and 35% of MA students' respect (unlike their 91% in the first part of the RQ) corroborates the fact that teacher's effect on final scores played an important role on their rate of respect to their teacher. However, 89% of Ph.D students' rate of respect to their teacher with their 93% of respect in the first part revealed that teacher's effect on final scores did not have a great impact on their rate of respect. They paid respect to their teacher in any event.

On the third part of the RQ, also, students were asked whether they believe respect to teacher is a sociocultural affair (first option) or a personal matter (second option). According to the Table 11, 77% of BA students, 80% of MA students and 78% of Ph.D students believed that

respect to teacher is a personal matter. That is, everybody has his or her own way and rate of respect according to his or her own personality traits.

7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study investigated the relationship between respect of students and teachers' scores in the classrooms. Findings put forward that there were no significant relationships between respect of students and teachers' scores among three different educational levels and between genders in case of teachers' effect on final scores mentioned in the first part of the questionnaire. However, there were significant relationships between respect of students and teachers' scores among three different educational levels and between genders in the second part of the questionnaire in which teachers did not have any effect on final scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' effect and lack of effect on final scores created considerable differences among three different educational levels and between genders in their rate of respect to their teacher. As an example, 96% of BA students and 93% of MA students (see Table 9) paid respect to their teacher in case of teacher's effect on final scores, but only 20% of BA and 35% of MA students paid respect to their teacher when teacher did not have effect on final scores. However, teachers' effect and lack of effect on final scores did not create considerable change in Ph.D students' rate of respect to their teacher (see Tables 9 and 10).

The findings of this study can be useful for curriculum developers and education authorities to develop programs and issue policies so that any effect of teachers' scores on final scores does not become stimuli for students' respect. Specially, this is notable in subjective scorings in the schools. When the method of scoring is subjective, there will be the threat of teachers' unwarranted effects on final scores which will be stimuli for students' respect and politeness in the classrooms. Therefore, education authorities should immediately lessen the threats of teachers' unwarranted effects on final scores by taking strong actions and issuing strong policies.

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