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## **Portraying Leader Characters through Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies in Job Interview: A Gender Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

This study captured the characteristics of a good leader from speech acts and politeness strategies performed by the candidates for the commissioner of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) during the interviews and public tests from a gender perspective. This qualitative research applies a naturalist paradigm and a sociopragmatic approach. The analysis of six videos selected by purposive sampling indicates no difference in the politeness strategies used by female and male candidates, both of which used positive politeness strategies. However, female candidates are slightly different compared to the male candidates in the use of directive speech acts of asking for permission and negative politeness strategies to give deference and impersonalize speakers. Ten character dimensions observed from the candidates include drive, collaboration, humility, integrity, temperance, justice, accountability, courage, transcendence, and judgment. The female candidates show a higher prevalence of collaboration and humility, whereas male candidates have a higher prevalence of integrity and judgment.

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## 1. Introduction

Linguistic choice in job interviews has a substantial impact on the evaluation of candidate competence in terms of mastery of spoken language, which determines the recognition of professional abilities and language competence (Lipovsky, 2010). Despite the importance of language mastery in a job interview, the study of linguistic choices in job interviews has not been widely established (Anonye, 2018). Most studies in job interviews are conducted based on the post-hoc questionnaire, job interview simulations, or data obtained through experimental research, while research exploring authentic job interviews is still in its infancy (Van De Mierop & Schnurr, 2018). Authentic job interview tests are usually closed, confidential, and not easily accessible to the public. In the era of public information disclosure, however, several institutions and state-owned enterprises

in Indonesia have organized an open interview for high-level leader positions as a commitment to transparency, such as in the vetting process of candidates for commissioner of the Corruption Eradication Commission (hereinafter referred to as KPK).

Traditional leadership is closely related to gender, especially masculinity or male dominance (Sung, 2013). Globalization and recent internal political shifts in Indonesia have prompted changes in gender roles in society, the most notable of which is the increase in the number of women in the workplace and in leadership roles which had previously become a patriarchal and religious society with male privileges as the primary breadwinner for many years (Petraki & Ramayanti, 2018). Although there has been a shift in gender roles in the workplace and leadership, the formal sector and the distribution of manager positions, as demonstrated in Table 1, still favor men.

**Table 1**

*Manager Position by Gender (%) from 2017 to 2019 (BPS Indonesia)*

Gender	Manager Position by Gender (%)		
	2017	2018	2019
Male	73.37	71.03	69.37
Female	26.63	28.97	30.63

The distribution of female managers or leaders, which has increased dramatically every year from 2017 to 2019, suggests that women play quite a role in leadership. Thus, a pragmatic communication of the candidates requires further examination to get a picture of the ideal leader's character since the character is the foundation for excellent leadership (Seijts & Gandz, 2018).

In the study of workplace discourse, politeness can represent the characteristics of speakers in leadership in which politeness is considered an important aspect in building a strong team, building relationships, and maintaining collegiality (Baxter, 2010). Previous language studies develop investigations of politeness and leadership in workplace discourse (Chalupnik & Atkins, 2020; Massoudi, 2017; Prayitno, 2010; Ramayanti, 2016; Santoso, 2013; Sung, 2013; Petraki & Ramayanti, 2018; Zunaidah et al., 2020). The studies indicate that politeness strategies have described the relationship between leadership and politeness strategies.

However, some studies only classify the politeness strategies used (Zunaidah et al., 2020), and some others only include politeness as leader character without delineating the representation of character elements from the use of politeness strategies (Chalupnik & Atkins, 2020; Massoudi, 2017; Petraki & Ramayanti, 2018; Prayitno, 2010; Ramayanti, 2016; Santoso, 2013; Sung, 2013; Zunaidah et al., 2020). In addition, these studies only studied politeness and its interaction with directive speech acts (Prayitno, 2010; Ramayanti, 2016; Santoso, 2013) and assertive and directive speech acts (Massoudi, 2017).

Leaders' effective speech acts in government can improve good governance through speech act choices and their perlocutionary acts (Akinkulore & Ariyo, 2015). Research by Jacko (2016), and Varma et al. (2020) suggest that speech acts and leadership have not been observed from politeness strategies with a gender perspective. Gender is one of the most important social factors influencing language

use in general and politeness in particular. However, research on the relationship of leadership, gender, and politeness in the Asian context, particularly in a more hierarchical workplace discourse of Indonesia, is still limited (Holmes, 2008). The politeness in job interviews of how candidates use self-promotion while still making a good impression remains questionable, especially regarding the appropriate level of politeness, how much should the candidate say, and how interviewers assess the politeness of the candidates (Lipovsky, 2010). Thus, there remains room for further investigation of politeness strategies from a gender perspective.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The framework in this study is Searle’s (1979) classification of speech act comprising assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declaration. The politeness strategies are Bald on Record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The linguistic component of the study of gender and language has three directions, namely differences in the use of language between genders, linguistic constructions of gender, and linguistic ways to refer to different genders (Litosseliti, 2014).

Several studies of linguistic politeness also

show differences between genders. The initial study of gender differences in language politeness was put forward by Lakoff (1973a) who argued that women were more polite than men. The same conclusion was conveyed by almost all studies on gender (Coates, 2015; Mills, 2003). According to Lakoff (1973b), politeness in women is associated with their powerlessness and marginal status in the community, as seen by differences in speech markers from men, in which women tend to use hedges and tag questions. Mills (2003) discusses the complex relationship between gender and politeness and argues that although there are circumstances when women speak femininely to show their behavior that appears to be more polite than men, there are times when women speak as disrespectfully as men.

There are five influential leadership attributes or characteristics in all organizational sectors, be it public, private, or non-profit (Klann, 2007), which are courage, caring, optimism, self-control, and communication. Character is the basis of good leadership as a mixture of virtues, personality, traits, and values that influence how leaders behave in various contexts (Seijts et al., 2015; Seijts et al., 2017; Seijts & Gandz, 2018). Some character dimensions that show the basis of good leadership are presented in Figure 1.

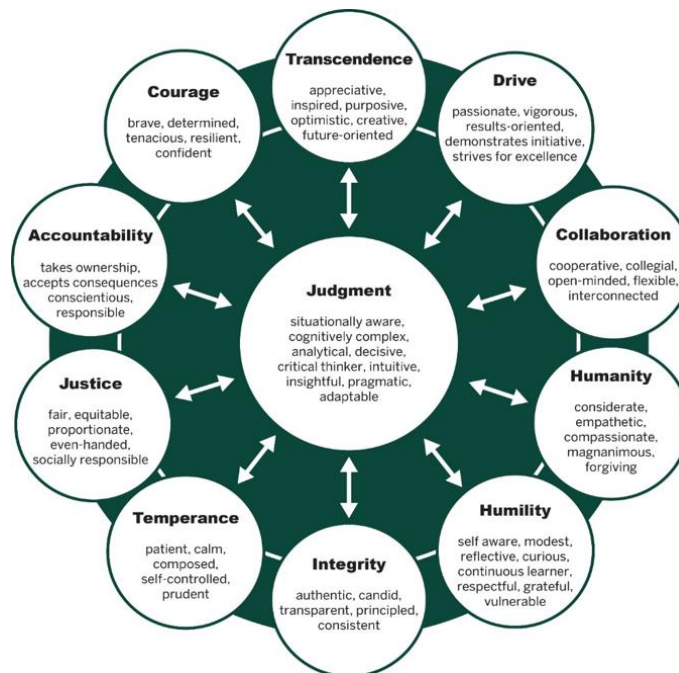


Figure 1

Character Dimensions and Associated Character Elements (Seijts et al., 2015; Seijts et al., 2017; Seijts & Gandz, 2018)

1. Drive. Good leaders encourage results intrinsically not due to external factors, which are demonstrated by passionate, initiative, vigorous, task-oriented behavior and strives for excellence.
2. Collaboration. Leaders need to form effective teams by working with others and being open-minded and flexible.
3. Humanity. Leaders who have a genuine concern for others, empathy, compassion, magnanimous, forgiving.
4. Humility. Humility includes self-awareness, capacity for reflection, modesty, curiosity, continuous learning, respect, and gratitude.
5. Integrity. Integrity is the wholeness, completeness, and wellbeing of leadership character characterized by candid, authentic, transparent, principled, and consistent behavior.
6. Temperance. Self-control allows the leader to calm down when others panic, which is characterized by patience, calmness, and prudence for the best interests of the organization.
7. Justice. Justice combines fairness and being even-handed in the work allocation and giving rewards including a sense of proportionality concerning praise or reproach.
8. Accountability. Accountability includes taking ownership, being conscientious in carrying out leadership mandates, and accepting consequences for actions.
9. Courage. Courage is a necessary character dimension for leaders characterized by determination, tenacity, resilience, and confidence.
10. Transcendence. Transcendent leaders are optimistic, creative, and purposive, that is, they focus on the future and inspire others.
11. Judgment. Judgment has a central role in an individual's character which includes caring for surroundings, analytical, critical, decisive, intuitive, insightful, pragmatic, and adaptable behavior.

Literature on gender differences in leadership suggests that female leadership is more democratic and relationship-oriented, while male leadership is characterized as autocratic and task-oriented (Kim, 2013). In line with this, Holmes (2008) and Schnurr (2009) stated that the masculine norms of leadership are characterized by assertiveness, directness, often confrontational, aggressive, competitiveness, display of power, dominance, individualism, and task-orientation. Meanwhile, normative feminine leadership is characterized by indirect, collaborative, supportive, caring, egalitarianism, and relationship-orientation, with frequent use of positive and negative politeness (Holmes, 2008; Schnurr, 2009).

The masculine speech style is discursively manifested in the production of extended speaking turns with the dominance and frequent use of interruptions (Schnurr, 2009). On the other hand, feminine speech style emphasizes relational linguistic aspects in collaborative construction in conversation, avoidance of disagreement, use of politeness strategies and hedging devices, as well as minimal response and supportive feedback (Sung, 2013). Table 2 depicts Peterson' (2018) summary of the ideal gender-based leader from literature.

**Table 2**  
*Gender-Based Leadership Ideals*

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Dominant, aggressive, vigorous, firm, authoritative, direct, straightforward, courageous, charismatic, strong, ambitious, decisive, competitive, hardworking, logical, analytical, competent, objective, rational, independent, confident, progressive, innovative, dynamic, diligent, determined, tenacious, persistent, results-oriented, and goal-oriented	Flexible, adaptable, cooperative, collaborative, community-oriented, friendly, supportive, engaged, encouraging, good listener, selfless, reliable, trustworthy, committed, sincere, conscientious, open to new ideas, creative, wise, humble, honest, loving, patient, understanding, expressive, empathetic, and socially responsible

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Corpus

This study analyzed speech acts and politeness strategies in interviews and public tests of the candidates for the commissioner of the KPK using a sociopragmatic approach. Culpeper (2011) views sociopragmatics as related to the interaction between certain aspects of the social context and the use of certain languages that lead to pragmatic meaning. Referring to Beeching and Woodfield (2015), the focus of sociopragmatics is on the relationship between linguistic action and social structure and relates to the influence of socio-contextual factors on language as social action.

The paradigm chosen is qualitative with the naturalist inquiry proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The naturalist paradigm believes that reality is plural, heterogeneous, and holistic that cannot be separated from its natural setting. This study used linguistic phenomena as data and is descriptive in nature with simultaneous

data collection and analysis. This study investigated in-depth the context of research related to who is involved, what happened, and where it occurred (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). This study also applied a case study by taking the context and cases seriously to understand a problem under study. Qualitative research was also chosen because it is relatively open research in exploration that begins with several concepts and will become more appropriate as the research progresses (Blumer, 1969).

#### 3.2. Procedure

##### 3.2.1. Data Collection

This study delved into speeches in the YouTube channel of the Ministry of State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia that uploaded a collection of interviews and public tests for the vetting process of the commissioner of the KPK in 2019. The source of data is in the form of a document (orthographic transcription of politeness strategies and speech acts) collected from the links listed in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Source of Data*

No.	Candidate' Name	Link
1.	Lili Pintauli Siregar	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLgbL27ETKQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLgbL27ETKQ</a> 29-08-2019
2.	Sri Handayani	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDNwTKedst0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDNwTKedst0</a> 29-08-2019
3.	Neneng Euis Fatimah	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqBT4CA0TeY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqBT4CA0TeY</a> 30-08-2019
4.	Alexander Marwata	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5luHMmnM_gM&amp;t=25s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5luHMmnM_gM&amp;t=25s</a> , 29-08-2019
5.	Nurul Ghufron	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp2BF6bjNEk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp2BF6bjNEk</a> 29-08-2019
6.	Supardi	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZ8g8VTRdlc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZ8g8VTRdlc</a> 29-08-2019

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the sample for this study. This research used triangulation methods. Triangulation of data sources was done by exploring data from different sources. The source of the comparative data was a document containing snippets of conversations in other YouTube channels, which are Kompas and Beritasatu YouTube channels. The data collection was carried out using the note-taking technique (orthographic transcription). The data collection method is the SLBC (Listening/*simak*, free/*bebas*, involving/*libat*, and talking/*cakap*).

##### 3.2.2. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the content analysis matrix by Santosa (2017) which is a modification of the analysis flow of Spradley

(1980) and Miles and Hiberman (1992). The analysis includes domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme analysis with componential tables. The domain is the x-axis with the gender (female and male), speech acts, and politeness strategies. The y-axis is a taxonomy of the leader character dimension. Thus, the componential matrix is the intersection between the x-axis and the y-axis to determine the relationship between components. The intersection will tell us the politeness strategies and the realization of speech acts. This study also examined whether there are speech differences influenced by gender.

### 4. Results

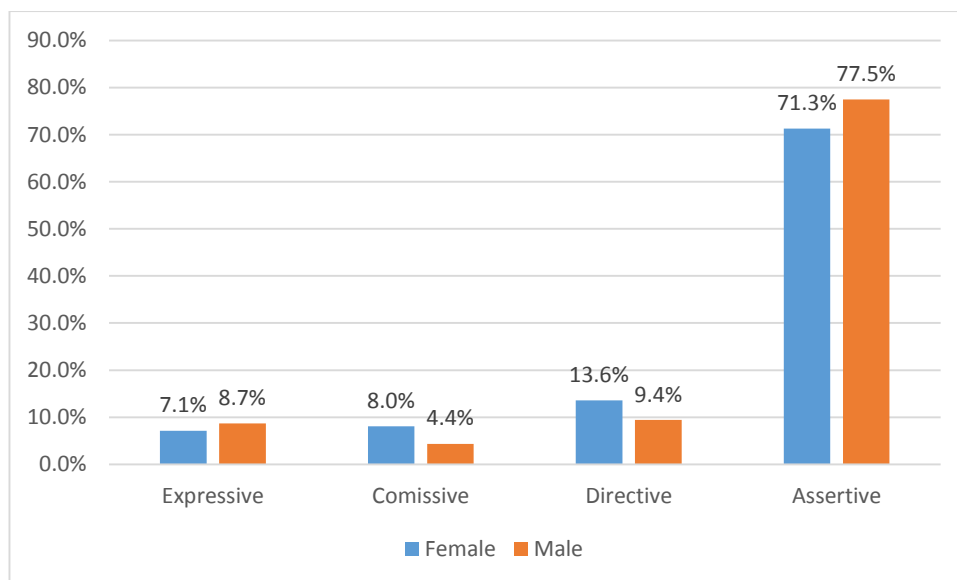
With some linguistic support, the findings of this study provide a novel perspective on the

implementation of leadership theory across genders. Character elements presented through speech acts and politeness strategies are

depicted and examined simultaneously in the following sections.

**Table 4**  
*Speech Acts Used by Male and Female Candidates in Interview*

No.	Speech acts	Female	Male
1.	Greeting	2	13
2.	Thanking	24	17
3.	Conveying Salam	2	2
4.	Apologizing	1	4
5.	Respecting	2	-
6.	Making a promise	16	6
7.	Expressing capability	8	6
8.	Intending	11	6
9.	Invoking	21	-
10.	Inviting	2	3
11.	Questioning	10	9
12.	Asking	-	3
13.	Accepting/ Letting	1	1
14.	Reporting	3	-
15.	Suggesting	22	23
16.	Expressing Opinion	146	143
17.	Answering	51	65
18.	Explaining	38	41
19.	Clarifying	29	44
20.	Affirming	29	18
21.	Concluding	14	6



**Figure 2**  
*Male and Female Candidates' Speech Acts in Interview*

Figure 2 indicates that in general, there is no difference in the speech acts used between males and females in interviews. Both genders

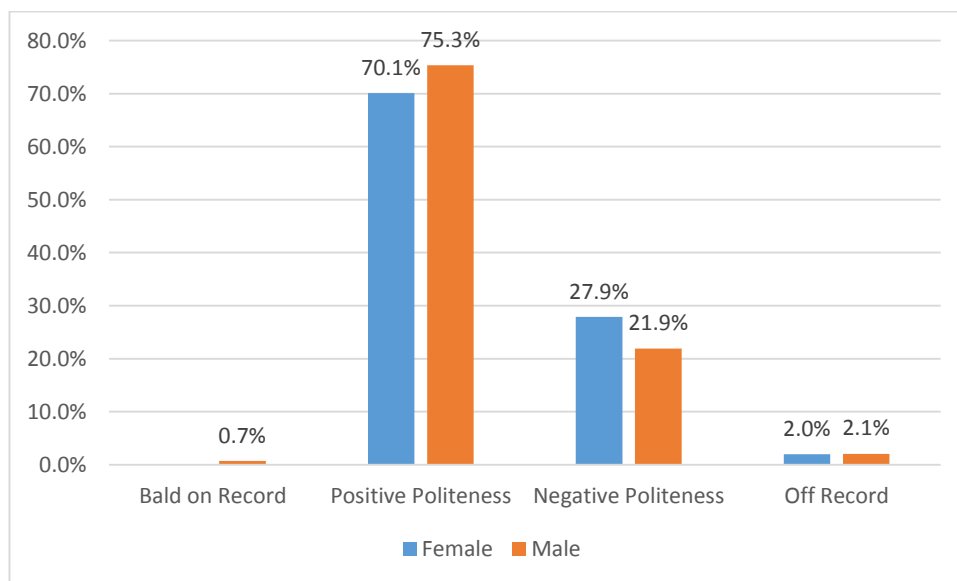
use more assertive speech acts in responding to panelist questions. Comissive and directive speech acts were the next most frequent speech

acts used by both genders with more frequent use of female than male candidates. The expressive speech acts of male candidates were slightly more than that of female candidates. Meanwhile, the expressive speech act of respect

and the directive speech act of reporting was not found in the speech of the male candidate, while the directive speech act of asking was not found in the speech of the female candidates.

**Table 5**  
*Male and Female Candidates' Politeness Strategies in Interview*

No.	Strategies	Female	Male
1.	<b>Bald on Record</b> Task orientation	-	3
2.	Seek agreement	41	58
3.	Avoid disagreement	205	210
4.	Joke	1	1
5.	Offer, promise	38	23
6.	<b>Positive Politeness</b> Be optimistic	15	11
7.	Include both S and H in the activity	3	15
8.	Give reasons	15	11
9.	Assume or assert reciprocity	7	1
10.	Be conventionally indirect	1	-
11.	Question	8	6
12.	<b>Negative Politeness</b> Give deference	80	53
13.	Apologize	2	4
14.	Impersonalize S and H	49	33
15.	Give hints	1	-
16.	Give association clues	2	-
17.	Presuppose	-	1
18.	<b>Off Record</b> Tautologies	3	1
19.	Use contradiction	-	3
20.	Use metaphors	-	1
21.	Use rhetorical questions	3	2
22.	Be vague	1	1



**Figure 3**  
*Male and Female Candidates' Politeness Strategies in Interview*

Overall, both used more positive politeness strategies in responding to questions. Slight differences were found in the use of negative politeness strategies where female candidates impersonalize and give deference more than men. The bald on record politeness strategy was only found in a few utterances of male candidates which did not represent the overall tendency. In addition, indirect negative politeness strategies were only found in the speech of female candidates. In addition, only a

few of the off-record politeness strategies were found in male and female candidates' speeches.

Next, of the eleven character dimensions in the concept of a good leader of Seijts et al. (2015; 2017) and Seijts & Gandz (2018), there are ten character dimensions found in interviews and public tests, including (1) drive, (2) collaboration, (3) Humility, (4) Integrity, (5) Temperance, (6) Justice, (7) Accountability, (8) Courage, (9) Transcendence, and (10) Judgment.

**Table 6**

*Character Dimensions from Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies by Gender*

Gender	Speech acts	Politeness Strategies	Character Dimension											
			Dri	Coll	Hma	Hmi	In	Tem	Jus	Acc	Cou	Trans	Jud	
Female	Expressive	PP	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
		NP	-	-	-	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Commissive	PP	5	6	-	9	1	-	-	1	2	14	5	
		NP	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Directive	PP	3	7	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	8	9	
		NP	-	4	-	26	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	
		OR	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Assertive	PP	23	17	-	16	49	1	2	1	6	24	135	
		NP	3	25	-	37	3	-	-	1	-	2	10	
		OR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	
	Male	Expressive	PP	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
			NP	-	-	-	30	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Commissive		PP	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	8	5	
		NP	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Directive		BOR	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	
		PP	14	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	5	8	
		NP	2	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Assertive		OR	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
		PP	15	6	-	4	52	1	2	1	8	16	174	
		NP	2	11	-	22	6	-	-	-	-	3	9	
			OR	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	5	

BOR : Bald on Record

PP : Positive Politeness

NP : Negative Politeness

OR : Off Record

Dri : Drive

In : Integrity

Cou : Courage

Coll : Collaboration

Tem : Temperance

Trans : Transcendence

Hma : Humanity

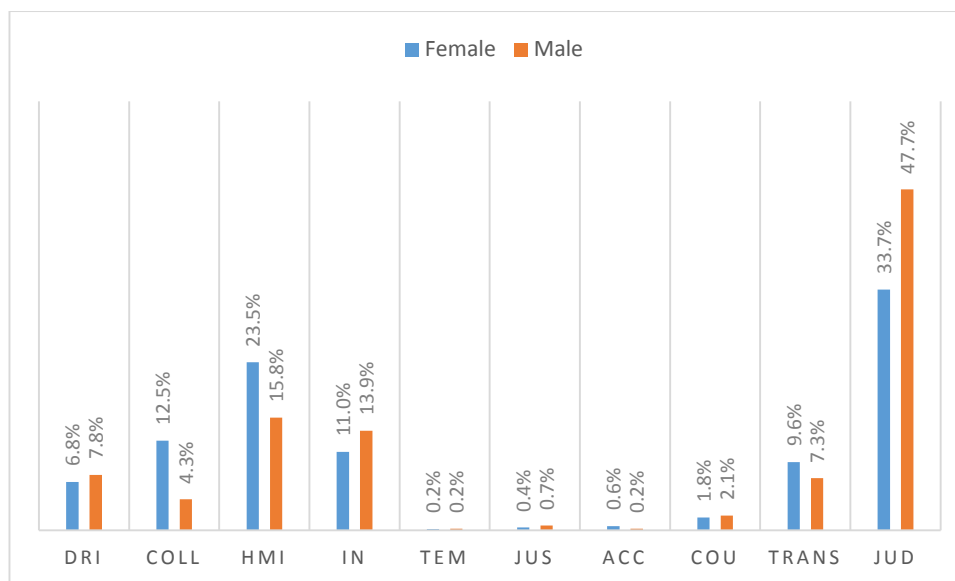
Jus : Justice

Jud : Judgment

Hmi : Humility

Acc : Accountability





**Figure 4**

*Male and Female Candidates' Character Dimensions of Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies*

Figure 4 indicates that both genders have good leadership character dimensions. However, there is a tendency that female candidates frequently show collaboration and humility, while male candidates are more dominant in judgment and integrity.

#### 4.1. Drive

Both genders indicate the use of speech acts and politeness strategies that represent the drive. Drive consists of passionate, demonstrative initiative, and strives for excellences. Passionate describes leaders who show a passion for achieving results and motivating others (Seijts et al., 2015). Commissive speech acts and positive politeness strategies of making a promise represent passionate, initiative, vigorous, task-oriented behavior and strives for excellence.

Sri Handayani : *I am interested, so I will carry out my duties as the commissioner of the KPK with responsibilities.*

Both genders strive for excellence, which is described as a leader whose a strong desire to succeed (Seijts & Gandz, 2018). Leaders who strive for excellence are characterized by their energy, body, and mind were given to achieve better results. The use of commissive speech acts and positive politeness strategies of making a promise demonstrate that they can consolidate

profits and generate more change (Seijts & Gandz, 2018).

Alexander : *...well that becomes our homework, Bu Yenti, to be more optimal in preventive assets.*

The character of the initiative is illustrated by immediate action when someone needs help without being asked to do so (Seijts et al., 2017). Leaders who take initiative face two situations concerning how to solve problems and provide the best solutions with creativity or innovation (Bruttel & Fischbacher, 2013).

Lili Pintauli : *I think this is one of the steps of prevention. I see the regulation as an effort, not just a discourse.*

Character elements of initiatives can be seen from the use of assertive speech acts of expressing opinions and positive politeness strategies of hedging opinion in the form of an initiative of submitting the regulation.

#### 4.2. Collaboration

Collaboration is more dominantly exhibited by female candidates. It includes cooperative and collegial. Cooperative is defined as involving and doing something together or working with others towards a common goal (Hornby, 2015). Cooperation can be identified from the use of

speech acts of inviting and positive politeness strategies of asking the interlocutor to join activities, for instance by saying “let us go”.

Both genders also show that they are collegial, in which female candidates tend to be more dominant. According to Seijts et al. (2017), collegial leaders are those who actively seek to resolve disputes peacefully.

Neneng : Later, *we* will invite all leaders of institutions and ministries to complete LHKPN. It is a must. If necessary, *we* are going to campaign LHKPN every day.

To impersonalize speakers and hearers in interviews and the public tests, they used pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ with ‘we’ to represent that the speaker is part of an organization and involves other parties in every step and decision. This is in line with the characteristic of collegiality that each decision is based on the empowerment of others (Seijts et al., 2015). Bahasa Indonesia distinguishes between exclusive and inclusive use of the pronoun ‘we’. Exclusive use of ‘we’ does not include listeners, while inclusive use of ‘we’ includes listeners (Rachmawati, 2017). ‘We’ also show representations of collegiality.

Sri Handayani : Of course, if there are inter-regional issues, *we* will first ask about what will be in the future and what programs *we* will carry out. Then *we* will proceed and continue what has not been implemented.

#### 4.3. Humility

Humility found in the speeches of the two genders includes reflective, curious, continuous learner, and respectful. Female candidates show more dominant humility, particularly respectful. Reflective leaders need deliberate reflection as an internal thought that includes self-awareness (focusing on one’s own behavior through honest self-evaluation to assess strengths and weaknesses) and full attention and personal wisdom (Castelli, 2016). Admitting mistakes and making corrections are

the characteristics of reflective leaders (Seijts & Gandz, 2018).

A continuous learner is characterized by a leader who can take advantage of every opportunity to learn from others (Seijts et al., 2017). It can be identified from commissive speech acts of expressing capabilities and positive politeness strategies of making a promise. The statement “*I have to study more deeply to handle the case*” shows the characteristics of continuous learners, which are part of humility. It deals with a leader who admits the lack of leadership (Seijts et al., 2017).

Respect is reflected in the use of expressive speech acts of respecting and negative politeness strategies of giving deference. In female candidates, this character element is indicated by lingual markers of ‘the honorable’ and sometimes by mentioning the position of the speech partner such as panelists, commissioner, panel, and examiners. Meanwhile, the most frequently used phrase of both female and male candidates is ‘thank you’. In addition, the female candidate showed their respect by using the speech act of asking for permission before initiating a response such as “*Please allow me to answer*”.

#### 4.4. Integrity

Male candidates show that they have more dominant integrity compared to male candidate. In previous literature, integrity is more dominant in the feminine leadership style. Candid, transparent, and principled are found in interviews and public tests of both genders. In the context of leadership, candid leaders do two things; they say what they think and do what they say (Seijts et al., 2015).

Neneng : I saw at a glance yesterday that there were so many actions, so honestly, *I haven't studied it in detail yet*

Vogelgesang (2008) states that transparency of leaders and subordinates is characterized by relevant information, openness to feedback, open about motives and reasons behind actions, and harmony between words and actions. Transparency is characterized by openness. For example, the use of speech act of accepting/letting and negative politeness

strategies to impersonalize with passive inclusion.

Sri Handayani : ... *Sure, you can check for BPATK, the savings are indeed like that...*

A good leader adheres to standards and responsibilities, behaves in a principled manner such as obeying rules and codes of ethics (Kleshinski, 2021). Principled leaders are characterized by firmness in holding moral standards and being consistent in difficult situations with their personal values and beliefs (Seijts & Gandz, 2018).

#### 4.5. Temperance

Temperance is usually found in female speech. However, this study found it in the male speech. It includes self-controlled and prudent. Self-controlled means being able to stay calm even in upsetting situations (Hornby, 2015). One of the characteristics of a self-controlled leader is being able to control emotions such as anger or disappointment, especially in difficult situations (Seijts et al., 2017).

Alexander : *If you think that it is cowardly that the leader doesn't dare to take action against the police, I'll leave it to you, but we tried to minimize it from the start by building good communication with the police and prosecutors.*

Responses to questions with an assertive speech act of clarifying and positive politeness strategies of avoiding disagreement using hedging opinions can represent character elements of self-controlled. This is in line with the characteristics of temperance (Seijts & Gandz, 2018), which is being calm, thinking clearly, and responding appropriately in a tense situation.

Prudent means being careful when making judgments and decisions and avoiding unnecessary risks (Hornby, 2015). Assertive speech acts of expressing an opinion and positive politeness of avoiding disagreement using hedging opinion are observed from lingual markers of 'necessary'. It represents prudence.

#### 4.6. Justice

Justice is very rarely found in conversation. Socially responsible character was found in the speeches of male and female candidates. Justice refers to a leader who is responsible and is willing to accept the social burdens as a result of an action. A socially responsible leader is reflected by the use of assertive speech act of clarifying and positive politeness of giving reasons.

Nurul Ghufron : *So, I teach about corruption as well. Therefore I feel that I am also responsible for law enforcement, which is now becoming the face of Indonesia.*

The utterance shows that speakers receive social burdens, which is the representation of a socially responsible character.

#### 4.7. Accountability

Accountability refers to accepting consequences. This character was found in both genders. Consequences mean the result of something that has occurred (Hornby, 2015). A leader accepts the consequences of an action or a stance. It is represented by the use of commissive speech acts of expressing capability and positive politeness strategies of making a promise.

Sri Handayani : *But if I am later accepted as a candidate for the commissioner of the KPK, of course, I must follow what is in the KPK and I am ready to be terminated from my position as a police officer and become a candidate for commissioner of the KPK.*

The commissive speech act of expressing capabilities and positive politeness strategy of making a promise describes that the candidate accepts all the consequences for the decisions or steps she chooses.

#### 4.8. Courage

Courage is usually more dominant in masculine leadership styles. However, this study shows no difference between candidates across genders in terms of courage. This character is seen from

commissive speech act of expressing capabilities and positive politeness of making a promise as in the sentence of “*Insyallah (If God is willing), I dare*”.

A good leader shows determination in dealing with difficult situations (Seijts & Gandz, 2018). Being confident means being convinced of the ability to do something and being determined to be successful (Hornby, 2015). It is represented by the use of commissive speech acts of making a promise and positive politeness strategies of making a promise.

Supardi : *I will definitely try that because that is one of my dreams. So I can trigger institutions both in terms of prevention and enforcement.*

“*I will definitely try that*” shows the confidence in triggering institution coordination for eradicating corruption.

#### 4.9. Transcendence

Both genders show transcendence in their speech. It includes purposive, future-oriented, optimistic, and creative. Purposive means having a goal, something that should be achieved clearly (Hornby, 2015). A purposive leader can be seen from the clear statement of purpose. It is represented by the use of commissive speech acts of intending and positive politeness strategies of making a promising as in the following data example:

Sri Handayani : ... I was graduated from the education faculty at Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, then *I wanted to become* a candidate for commissioner KPK. *I wanted to reveal* all corruption cases in this country...

Future-oriented leaders can imagine different future conditions (Seijts et al., 2017). It is reflected from the use of commissive speech acts of intending and positive politeness strategies of making a promise to solve a problem and to have a concept of action to be taken in the future. Speech that describes

future-oriented character is presented in the following data:

Alexander : ... Well, *in the future, I have a plan to replace* the SPDP to be the only platform for the law enforcement for the KPK, the police, and prosecutors to issue SPDP.

Transcendence allows leaders to see the big picture and take a long-term view that focuses on the future rather than pursuing momentary wisdom (Seijts et al., 2015).

Optimistic refers to expecting good things to happen or something to be successful and showing positive feelings towards something (Hornby, 2015). An optimistic speech can be represented by assertive speech acts of expressing opinions with politeness strategies.

Lili Pintauli : *If this is implemented properly and supervised by the LPSK and the KPK, the corruption perceptions index will surely slowly rise.*

Creative leaders demonstrate the ability to generate ideas and products with an innovative and original approach (Seijts et al., 2017). Creative leaders can be identified through the use of commissive speech acts of making a promise and positive politeness strategies of making a promise. In this case, the promise is to improve the MOU.

Sri Handayani : ... *if I were to be the commissioner, at least the MOU would be corrected* in terms of how law enforcement can run and the role of KPK in commanding the institutions.

#### 4.10. Judgment

Judgment is the most dominant character dimension observed from candidates of both genders. Male candidates show that they have more dominant in judging. Judgment includes being situationally aware, analytical, decisive, critical thinker, intuitive, insightful, and adaptable. First, awareness means being interested and knowing about something and considering it important (Hornby, 2015).

Nurul Ghufro : *From the perspective of science, being a professor is the highest career but in the context of benefiting mankind, I think that the KPK is more useful at this time for the nation and state.*

The use of assertive speech acts to express opinions and positive politeness strategies with hedges show a situationally-aware leader which is indicated by flexibility with new situations to be more effective and appropriate.

Analytical, decisive, and critical thinkers are previously thought of as masculine leadership characters. Yet, female candidates also show these characters although not as much as men. This broke the stereotype that in the past, women tended to underestimate their abilities in leadership (Sturm et al., 2014). Analytical is using the method of logical thinking about something to understand it, especially by looking at all the parts separately (Hornby, 2015). Being analytical can be identified by the use of assertive speech acts to express opinions with positive politeness strategies with hedging as follows:

Neneng : *If I think about and analyze it, I will explain it concretely that every permit must be open. Everyone should know what will happen if they don't apply for a permit, for example by holding IT. Well, that's where there will be no meeting between those who need permission and those who give permission.*

A critical leader is characterized by the ability to criticize such as giving feedback, analyzing sharply, and observing. The use of assertive speech acts of hedging with positive politeness strategies of the use of hedges can represent critical thinker.

Sri Handayani : *Well, if there is a corruption report in the KPK, but the KPK is a corruption eradication commission, thus, the KPK should not have committed corruption.*

Intuitive means being able to understand something by using feelings rather than by considering facts (Hornby, 2015). Intuitive leaders are characterized by an intention to do something that can be seen from assertive speech acts of clarifying and using positive politeness strategies to avoid disagreement with others.

Insightful is the ability to show a clear understanding of the situation (Hornby, 2015). Insightful leaders can be represented by assertive speech acts of expressing opinions with hedges such as in the phrase "*In a legal perspective*" and "*According to the Regulation*". Finally, adaptable leaders notice the environment to determine the characteristics of the situation and are aware of what is needed in a changing environment, have the right frame of mind in any situation, and strive to apply the modified skills and competencies (Cojocar, 2012).

Sri Handayani : *... But I, as the chief of the police, certainly understand the connection with a few areas of investigation. Then as the deputy chief of the police, at least I have to understand about these areas.*

Assertive speech acts with positive politeness strategies using hedging in the example above indicates an adaptable leader which is shown by the awareness of the speaker in adjusting to the situations.

## 5. Discussion

This study demonstrates that the politeness strategies of female candidates were not different from those of male candidates. The finding in this study is different from previous research suggesting differences in speaking styles of different genders (Holmes, 2008; Schnurr, 2009; Sung, 2013; Qari, 2019; Sensales, Areni, & Del Secco, 2016). It is in stark contrast with Sensales, Areni, and Dal Secco (2016) who found that there is sometimes discrimination against women by disguising their existence or gender distinctiveness, demonstrating discrimination against women by emphasizing their gender in political communication. In terms of politeness strategy, this study is distinct from Qari (2019) who

suggests that males and females exhibit different apology strategies.

This study corroborates Ramayanti's research (2016) that managers of both genders show similar positive and negative politeness strategies at meetings. This study confirms that leaders more dominantly use positive politeness strategies in the workplace (Ramayanti, 2016; Zunaidah et al., 2020). The politeness strategies are used by female and male candidates in interviews and public tests. There is no difference in speech acts used in both genders. Both used more assertive speech acts in interviews. Differences were found in the use of directive speech acts of asking for permission and negative politeness strategies of respecting and impersonalizing speakers which were used more frequently by women than men.

The character of a good leader is found in both genders. This is in line with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2019 concerning the Corruption Eradication Commission. KPK carries out its duties on the principles of legal certainty, openness, accountability, proportionality, and respect for human rights. Integrity reflects the mandate in the Regulation that the candidates must be capable, honest, and have high moral integrity. Collaboration supports the regulations that the KPK is collegial in nature. Although both genders have character dimensions, there are character dimensions that are more dominant in a certain gender. Female candidates are more likely to have collaboration and humility, while male candidates are more likely to have integrity and judgment. This confirms previous literature (Holmes, 2008; Kim, 2013; Peterson, 2018; Schnurr, 2009; Sung, 2013) that there are differences in the tendency of leaders of different genders, in that the feminine leadership style is more collaborative.

Judgment is mostly found in the speech of both female and male candidates in interviews and public tests. This corroborates the opinion of Seijts et al. (2017) that judgment is at the center of the leader's character since it plays an important role in decision making. Judgment plays an important role in leader character because it combines other dimensions into informed contextual behavior that allows conscious and unconscious assessments in activating each character dimension at the appropriate time (Seijts & Gandz, 2018). Thus,

male and female candidates of the commissioner of KPK fulfill the criteria for good leaders based on the dominant character dimension, which is judgment. Judgment is mostly represented by assertive speech acts and positive politeness strategies.

Analytical and critical thinkers belong to judgment. They are represented by the use of assertive speech acts and positive politeness strategies using hedging. Although hedges are used by speakers as a linguistic means to express doubt and skepticism (Salager-Meyer, 1994), they signal uncertainty and a lack of commitment to the truth of the proportions being conveyed (Prince et al., 1982) and makes one's own opinion safe and secure (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, in a different context and pragmatic behavior, utterances with hedges can show another character such as the critical thinker. This is in line with Bruce (2016) that hedges are one of the metadiscourse markers other than attitude markers that are involved in the expression of critical thinking that works synergistically and is used to make critical statements. Bruce mentions that in critical statements, hedges are often used in expressing critical evaluations and can be more complex and varied when employing adjectives and adverbs in addition to modal and non-modal verbs.

Collaboration is dominantly found among females. Even so, male candidates also show a lot of speech that signifies cooperative and collegial character. Linguistic markers for collaboration are the use of positive politeness strategies in asking the interlocutor and negative politeness strategies of impersonalizing speakers and addressees with the exclusive and inclusive use of 'we'. Inclusive 'we' are also used when speaking as if everything is shared among members and treating someone as a representative of the group rather than as a helpless individual, which refers to their social status and the support they get from their group (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Holmes and Marra (2011) suggest that the use of the word inclusive 'we' emphasizes the collaborative nature of the organization and shared values. McDowell (2015) argues that the pronoun 'we' is used as a collegial relationship indicator that allows the discursive construction of group identity

through ties and enables consensus and group decisions.

Humility was found to be more dominant among females, especially when initiating a response which was indicated by speech acts of asking for permission and negative politeness strategies of giving deference. This is in contrast to the findings of Ramayanti (2016) showing that there was no difference between genders in giving deference in the workplace. The findings show that in addition to being respectful, continuous learner are dominantly found in female candidates. The negative politeness strategies for female candidates on collaboration and humility are consistent with the patriarchal culture, which dictates that women employ more negative politeness since they have to speak more formally than men and society expect them to be polite (Holmes, 2006a,b; Watts, 2003).

The results of this study indicate that female and male candidates did not show any difference in the use of speech acts and politeness strategies in interviews and public tests. The difference is only shown by the females who use less negative politeness strategies. The utterances of female and male candidates in interviews and public tests indicate the ten character dimensions of a good leader except for humanity, which is not found in the conversation. Both female and male candidates used more assertive speech acts and positive politeness strategies of judgment, which is the core of the character dimension. Even though both genders have good leadership characters, there is a tendency that females are more dominant in collaboration and humility. Meanwhile, males are more dominant in integrity and judgment. Several characters indicate a shift in leadership style. Characters that originally became a masculine leadership style such as courageous, confident, decisive, analytical, and critical thinker, were also exhibited by the female candidates. To date, some current research shows that female leaders are more confident and see themselves as equal to men. On the other hand, the feminine leadership style, which is found in many works of literature with the character of wise, honest, respectful, adaptable, socially responsible, and

creative, is also found in the speech of male candidates. Collaboration, which was previously only seen in feminine leadership styles, is now also present in male candidates' speeches, such as in job interviews, despite being predominantly found in a female candidate. Hence, both genders exhibit cooperative and collegial character.

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