Are women universally more polite than men? The first portion of my paper discusses other linguists’ work in response to this question. I use their data from other languages that are spoken in different cultures to examine the cross-cultural application of gendered politeness. I hypothesize that the data that I collect demonstrate that, in the context of native speakers of American English, women employ politeness techniques more often than men do. The data demonstrate that American women are more polite than men, although they are polite in different contexts more often than in others. It does not show universality per se because I am not studying every language in every society in the world.

I conducted a study of spoken American English in an academic context. I counted the number of times that native speakers of American English uttered the politeness indicator “sorry” and used honorifics, either “Mr.” “Mrs.” or “Professor,” since the material is coming from an academic context and many students use “Professor” as an honorific and marker of politeness. I gathered results from all age groups, academic status and/or position, and groups that learned another language before English, so as to study a wide variety of subjects.