ATLANTIS
PRESS

Teachers' Politeness Strategies in Delivering Feedback on Classroom Presentation of English Undergraduate Students

Riyan Febriansyah[1,*] Syafi'ul Anam[1]

[1] *Language and Literature Education Department, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia*
*Corresponding author. Email: riyan.19017@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Teachers often use specific strategies to maintain the classroom atmospheres and minimize the social distances among the teachers and the students. One of these strategies is called the politeness strategy. Unfortunately, even though the aim of conducting politeness strategy is to build students-teachers interaction, it is found that the students still respond both positively and negatively toward the teachers' politeness strategies. Specifically, it happens when the teachers deliver feedback to the students' presentation. This study enlightens the classroom interaction among the teachers and the students by observing two English teachers' politeness strategies, and interviewing four students toward their teachers' politeness strategies. The observations are focused on the teachers' corrective feedback, and the interviews are maintained on the effect of different teachers' politeness strategy during the students' presentation. As the key theory, this study use a theory of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1978), it focuses on the expressions of the Face Threatening Act (FTA) during communication. The result from the classroom observation showed that the teachers frequently use positive politeness, and avoid negative politeness strategy. On the other hand, to avoid the negative responds, the interviews showed that the students prefer their teachers to use positive politeness strategies in giving feedback since the students prefer to get praise.

Keywords: Classroom Presentation, Corrective Feedback, Teacher's Politeness Strategy, EFL Students' Attitudes

1. INTRODUCTION

The classroom interaction often is influenced by the way teachers in communicating with the students. Different expressions or utterances from teachers provide different students' responses. Therefore, to avoid students' inadequate feedback, in teaching and learning process, the teachers use certain strategies to build student-teacher relationships.

Politeness strategies are used to positively increase student-teacher interaction [1]. Unfortunately, not all of the students give feedback as polite as the teacher. The researcher found phenomena observing certain EFL classrooms in the undergraduate university in Surabaya. The phenomena are found when the teachers, who act as the class leader, give feedback in the classroom presentation during the process of teaching and learning. Even when the teachers had used politeness strategies,

several students are still uncomfortable with the teacher. In some instances, the students have an issue with teacher A while enjoying the teaching process from teacher B. They feel nervous, afraid, and threatened by teacher A, but have no issues with teacher B. Later, the researcher found that the issues often arise from the teacher's feedback.

In many cases, the teachers have little or no conscious to their feedback. In fact, it actually influences the students' response [2]. Although the type of feedback used by teacher A and B are equally corrective feedback, the way teachers provide the feedback is different. It also means that the teachers use exactly different politeness strategies.

The phenomena showed that the teacher's feedback is not a source of the issue since the teachers provide the same corrective feedback. The issue possibly arises from the different politeness strategies delivered in the teacher's feedback. Therefore, this research is conducted

to enlighten how the different politeness strategies influence different students' responses, primarily when it is delivered in the teacher's feedback. This research elaborates the students' response when the teacher uses specific politeness strategies. In identifying politeness strategies, the researcher focuses only on the oral corrective feedback on the students' presentations.

The researcher conducts the study in the English faculty of an undergraduate university in Surabaya, particularly in one of its courses, which provides classroom presentation as one of the learning activities. The teaching and learning process in this classroom involve students' presentation. It is conducted by one until two students in groups. During the presentation, students are required to speak in English. The teacher's feedback will be delivered after the presentation. All condition which needed by the researcher is prepared in this class, including teachers' politeness strategies when utter the feedback on EFL Classroom presentation. To sum up the research background above, this research formulated two questions as below: (1) what kind of politeness strategies frequently expressed by the teacher in delivering corrective feedback toward the students' presentation? (2) What are students' responses when teachers use a particular politeness strategy in delivering the feedback?

1.1. Politeness Strategies

Language of politeness is an important factor that must be owned by the subjects of communication [3]. The polite expressions used by people in their interactions with others are indicated as a politeness strategy [1]. Politeness can be described as (a) how the language shows different roles of the speaker and the hearer relationship, (b) how the language shows the interaction gap between the subjects of communication, and (c) how the language shows the effort of the speaker and the hearer to maintain the communication in a comfortable situation [4]. During communication, everybody likes to be understood. They also do not want to be disturbed by another while in conversation. Therefore, politeness strategy shows and helps people avoid the conversation between speaker and hearer from being broken.

The function of communicating politely is to build effective and comfortable situation between the speaker and the hearer [5]. Unfortunately, politeness is cultural-based behavior. An utterance which is known as polite in specific areas are not necessarily the same in another area [6]. Within each society, politeness strategy has many varieties. It also varies based on gender, language, and culture. In certain times, inappropriate strategies

possibly have disastrous effects [7]. The example is when non-native people express language. Following the several linguists, maintaining the social order and see the communication as a precondition of human cooperation is the point of politeness strategy such as when the children have to greet the older people or when a mother ask her children to be nice to anybody. Politeness strategy is important to stick the convention that had been learned from the human being exist. In dividing the politeness strategies, Brown and Levinson provide four characteristics including negative politeness, positive politeness, off record strategy, and bald on record strategy. Through negative politeness speakers do not want to reduce the interference of the hearer' freedom of action, while through positive one speaker wants to make hearer give positive face and he assumes that generally his wants is also the hearer's want. Off-record strategy is chosen by speaker through using metaphor, irony, rhetorical questions or giving many hints whereas bald on record one is used in emergency situation when speaker has greater power over the hearer where the tendency to perform FTA is very small.

2. METHOD

This research is a qualitative study where a qualitative research method was used. The participants are two English teachers and four undergraduate university students. Those participants are the teachers and students studying in the English faculty at one of the undergraduate universities in Surabaya. This EFL classroom provides students' presentations as one of its learning activities. The data was collected from classroom observation and students' interviews. The observation uses a video recorder. The identification of politeness strategy is based on the expression of Face Threatening Act (FTA) theory [1]. As the study's limitation, teachers' politeness strategy is based only on the teacher's utterances in delivering oral feedback toward presentation. English teachers are the role models for the students in understanding good, appropriate, and polite language [8]. Interviews are also conducted to enrich the data. Precisely, the interview is finished after the teaching and learning process. The researcher asks the four students who became presenters that day individually. Following the interview guideline, the interview contains specific questions asking about students' feedback on their teacher's politeness strategies.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher got the complete data from all the research instruments, including classroom observation

and students' interviews. To complete the research, the researcher analyzed the data systematically and accurately. The data are analyzed in order to draw a conclusion about the research questions. The researcher described the finding into two parts. First, the researcher identifies the teachers' politeness strategies, and then he elaborated the students' response toward teacher's politeness strategies into individual clear paragraphs.

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Teacher's Politeness Strategy in Delivering Corrective Feedback on Students' Classroom Presentation

The observation is conducted two times with different teachers. Data was taken during the teaching and learning process. At first, based on the video recorder, the researcher points out the teacher's utterances related to feedback. After underlying all the feedback utterances during teaching and learning process, the researcher then identified it based on the characteristic of politeness strategy by [1]. The table below shows the precise data about the teacher's utterances related to politeness strategy that was used when giving feedback.
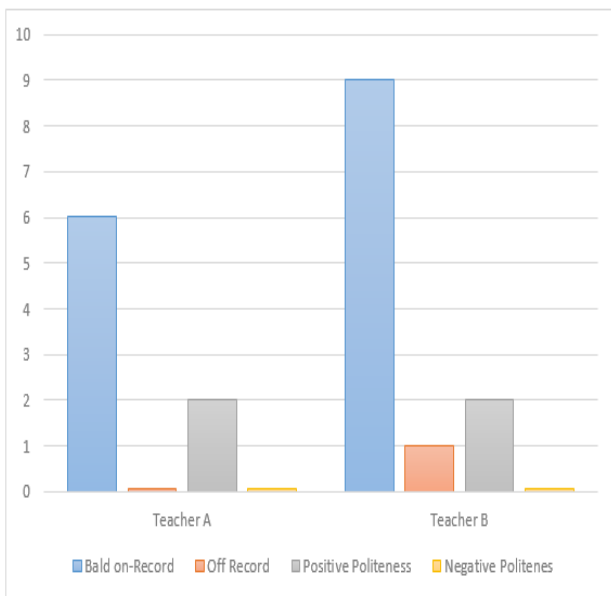

Figure 1 Teacher's politeness strategies in delivering feedback

Based on the figure above, there are 20 data related to the utterances expressed on the teacher's corrective feedback. The data also had been identified as a certain kind of politeness strategies.

3.1.2 Students' Response when Teachers Use Particular Politeness Strategy in Delivering Feedback

The data is taken from the students' interviews. According to the data found, the students prefer more to one type of politeness strategies. As the researcher had asked four types of politeness strategies, most participants preferred to get teachers' feedback in the way of positive politeness strategy. The more in-depth explanation related to the reasons for choosing this type of politeness strategy is elaborated in the discussion section.

3.2 Discussion

The discussion in this study is presented based on the result of finding. It also discusses the review of related theory and analyses the data to clarify the findings. The researcher elaborated this section into two parts as same as the finding section.

3.2.1 Teacher's Politeness Strategy in Delivering Corrective Feedback on Students' Classroom Presentation

The researcher uses theory by Brown and Levinson [1]. The theory helps the researcher in identifying characteristics of politeness strategies used on teacher's corrective feedback. Based on the research finding, specific kinds of politeness strategies are found. It is used by the teacher when delivering feedback during the presentation. The brief discussion will be elaborated below.

In total, there are 20 utterances using politeness strategies. Most utterances are used bald on record type (15 utterances), followed by positive politeness strategy (4 utterances). Therefore, only 1 utterance uses off record strategy with no utterances stated by the teacher using negative politeness strategy. The researcher divides the discussion into four.

3.2.1.1 Bald on record

Bald on record try to avoid the effect of FTA on the hearers and minimize the effort on the speakers' acts,

therefore the speakers who use this strategy will communicate in the most direct way. This strategy provides the minimal face threatening act by expressing the imperative form of utterances without any redress. It is found that people only use this strategy to the environment that close and comfortable with them. During the conversation, by doing bald on record, the speakers are likely not to shock the persons to be addressed or make them feel uncomfortable. In teaching and learning context, when this strategy is conducted, teachers are indicated to be fast in finishing classroom presentations. The teacher possibly wants the presentation to finish early and does not spend the time. The teachers who conduct bald on record tends to minimize the distance of the student-teacher relationship. It is also observed that the students do not feel awkward, strained, or nervous since the teacher delivers the feedback in direct and straightforward ways.

3.2.1.2 Off record

An off record means how the speakers to act ambiguously. Unlike bald on record strategy, performing the expressions as ambiguous, indirect, and unclearly are the characteristic of this strategy. Therefore, when the speakers choose to avoid direct Face Threatening Act (FTA) they will use off record. The situation of being free from FTA means that the speakers and the hearers are free from each other impositions [1]. As with the theory, the teacher utterances are indicated as using this type when they give the feedback indirectly. It is observed that the teachers use metaphors in stating the feedback. Sometimes they also rise up several clues or hints before the feedback is clearly stated. Teachers may think that it is less offended when the feedback is delivered indirectly.

3.2.1.3 Positive politeness

Positive politeness can be described as the language of intimacy. The speakers use this strategy to share the feeling of familiarity with the hearers around. The main purposes of positive politeness are to rebuild any threatening act and minimize interaction distance between the speakers and the hearers. The communications will change into a positive face, and the communicators will feel like they are a part of the group, such as friends or family. In the classroom, positive politeness is meant to maintain a feeling of solidarity in the student-teacher relationship by choosing specific numbers of utterances that want to have listened to each other. When conducting this strategy, teachers try to build fun and enjoyable classroom situation. The

teachers support it by stating the friendliness among the feedback.

3.2.1.4 Negative politeness

Negative politeness strategy is the opposite of positive politeness strategy. Not to minimize the social distances among the communicators, the negative politeness even will develop it. As an avoidance-based strategy, Negative politeness makes the speakers to respect the addressee of the hearer's negative faces. Also, this strategy does not interfere with the hearer's freedoms of action [1]. This strategy is the one that is not conducted by the teachers. Different from positive politeness that builds friendliness and solidarity, negative politeness does not realize it. When the speakers apply this strategy, it indicates that there possibly some social distances in student-tea interaction.

3.2.2 Students' Response when Teachers Use Particular Politeness Strategy in Delivering Feedback

In conducting the interview, the researcher asks the students about the way teachers deliver feedback. The students explain their opinion related to the teachers when they use specific politeness strategies when giving feedback. All the students' responses are then classified into four types of politeness strategies. According to the interview with the students, it is concluded that students prefer positive politeness strategies. The things below are the specific discussion.

3.2.2.1 Bald on record

The teachers tend to use bald on record strategy in giving feedback. Relating this to the students' opinion, three of them enjoy this strategy. By stating what is important to say, it minimizes their presentation time. They can go back to sit as soon as possible. Student A: "*Semakin to the point feedback-nya semakin cepat presentasi saya selesai.*" Only one student stated that she feels quite embarrassed when the teacher directly corrects their presentation. Student D: "*saya agak malu ketika guru langsung membenarkan pronunciation saya yang salah ketika presentasi.*" Although the teacher does not mean to shame the students, there are still students who feel offended. When the researcher asks a direct question, asking the students which one of the politeness strategies they are preferred, no one of them hand up for bald on record strategy.

3.2.2.2 Off record

One feedback utterance related to off record strategy stated by the teacher B. Although it has been discussed that unlike bald on record that being direct, there is still the student who enjoy the feedback using off record strategy. Student D: "*saya lebih nyaman ketika guru menggunakan perumpamaan ketika memberi feedback. Istilahnya feedback secara tersirat begitulah mas*". At the same times, there is also the student who does not enjoy the feedback delivered through off record strategy. Student C: "*feedbacknya tidak menyinggung, tapi saya juga jadi sulit memahami kalau penyampaiannya diputar-putar.*" These are the statements of students who become the presenters, where Teacher B leads the class. Again when the researcher asks about the students' preferences, no one of the teachers chooses off record strategy.

3.2.2.3 Negative politeness

As there is no teacher feedback categorized as a negative politeness strategy, the researcher does not ask about this type of strategy.

3.2.2.4 Positive politeness

The last, the researcher asks about positive politeness strategy. Although there is only four teachers' feedback who used positive politeness strategy, surprisingly all the students' response is positive. Students B: "*saya merasa dihargai ketika dipuji guru.*" Students C: "*kalau feedbacknya baik, harapan saya untuk dapat nilai bagus lebih besar mas.*" Students D: "*puas mas ketika dapat feedback positif, rasa capek menyiapkan materi jadi hilang.*" Statements before are clear enough to assume that the students like to get praise from their teachers rather than to hear what should be improved from their presentation. This interview is also followed by the students' preference that chooses positive politeness as the strategy they want from their teacher in giving feedback. To sum up the discussion of students' responses toward teachers' politeness strategies, the researcher indicated that students prefer the teacher to use positive politeness strategies in giving feedback since their reason is they like to get praise from their teachers.

4. CONCLUSION

The results had been gained according to the politeness, it shows three types of politeness strategies used by the teachers: positive politeness, off record, and bald on record strategy. Each strategy has its categorization. When delivering feedback toward the presentation, there are 20 utterances. Bald on record strategy is counted as 15, followed by four positive politeness strategies strategy on the teacher's corrective feedback. Since observation was conducted on two different EFL teachers, and only one utterance used Off-record strategy, this research enlightens that teachers frequently apply bald on record to deliver their feedback. It indicated the teachers like to be fast during a classroom presentation. The teacher wants the presentation can be finished promptly. The teachers, who involve bald o strategy, tend to reduce the student-teacher social distance by avoiding the utterances of ambiguity.

On the other hand, in answering research question number two, the interview is provided. It was asked about what the students' responses when teachers use specific politeness strategies when delivering the feedback. The students' response is surprisingly unexpected. The students prefer to get praise from their teachers rather than hear what should be improved from their presentation. However, the result of this interview does not become representative of all EFL learners in Indonesia. Only limited students are involved in the interview.

The aim of conducting politeness strategy is to build students-teachers interaction. But it is found that the students still response both positively and negatively toward the teachers, even though the teachers had involved the politeness strategies. Specifically, it happens when the teachers deliver feedbacks to the students' presentation. Fortunately, this study enlightens that although the teachers used politeness strategies, most of them tend to conduct the bald on record strategy. On the other hand, the students prefer the positive politeness strategy to gain positive responses. Changing the strategies into the positive one is suggested if the teachers like their students to response better toward them or teaching process.

This research finally had enlightened about politeness strategies used by the teachers when delivering feedback. Unfortunately, there is nobody perfect. For more profound research, the researcher has suggestions for other researchers. Since the focuses only on oral feedback, the other researchers who interest in the same topic can conduct the research related to the written feedback and students-peer feedback. However, several weaknesses in the study probably become references in order to revise future deeper researches. Hopefully, this study will fulfill the limited research resources studying the teacher's politeness strategy in delivering corrective feedback.

REFERENCES

[1] L. Brown, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

[2] S. Omar, "Factors affecting some students' responses to feedback", *Middle East Journal for Scientific publishing,* vol. 3(1), 2020, pp. 9-60.

[3] Watts, *Politeness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

[4] S. Richard, *Dictionary of language teaching and applied Linguistic*, London: Longman, 2016.

[5] T. Timotius, "The Realization of Imperative Politeness of Indonesian Language Teacher in Teaching Learning Process in Krista Citra Parakan Junior High School", *Journal of Advances in Social Science Education and Humanities Research*, vol. 461, 2019, pp. 250-254.

[6] M. Shahrzad, "Politeness Strategies Used in Text Messaging: pragmatic Competence in An Asymmetrical Power Relation of Teacher-Students", *SAGE Open*, vol. 3(2), 2016, pp. 1-13. Doi:10.1177/2158244016632288

[7] Prayitno, *Kesantunan sosiopragmatik*, Surakarta: Universitas Muhammadiyah Press, 2018.

[8] L. Peng, "Research on college teachers' politeness strategies in EFL classroom*", Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 3(1), 2012, pp. 981–991.