

Politeness Strategies in EFL Classroom: Building Positive Values in Students

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Abstract—Politeness is basically the study of knowing the way people use certain languages while they are having communication. In a language pedagogy, it does not rely on the Brown and Levinson theory of politeness to form the basis of teaching “politeness phenomena;” rather, there should be an attempt to raise cultural awareness. Moreover, it proposes the learning of politeness in a foreign language is a process of “reframing”, re-analyzing existing frames regarding the linguistic behavior that generally occurs in a certain context. This paper, therefore, aims at investigating politeness strategies used by the students and teacher in EFL, and the effect on good values applied in EFL. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative method. Furthermore, 30 students were involved in the research. However, two instruments were used such as recording and observation. The result reveals that 40 % utterances applied positive politeness strategies, 30 % negative politeness strategies, and 30 % bald on-record strategies. Meanwhile, the activities showing positive utterances are positive academic instruction, motivation, classroom management, and evaluation. Those bring about: 1) the positive values such as positive utterances in giving opinion; 2) avoiding direct expression of disagreement; 3) changing instruction into awareness.

Keywords: *politeness strategies, EFL, and positive values*

I. INTRODUCTION

In a communication, several terms must be considered such as the goal of communication, socio-cultural, interactional, strategic and linguistic competences. It is stated by Cerce-Murcia that a learner of foreign language should have communicative competence (2007:45) [1]. Those terms relate to pragmatics. People's knowledge on pragmatics are very important. Moreover, communicative action and ability to use a language appropriately according to the context is based on the knowledge of pragmatics. It is in line with Consolo's opinion on how the communication system, teacher-student interaction contributing students' language development (2006: 34)

[2]. Politeness is a common social phenomenon, and is regarded as a moral code in human communication and social activities. As we know, a positive learning atmosphere is encouraging both teachers and students. Consequently, it is of much importance to know about the extent in which teacher and students apply politeness strategies in EFL context

This study focuses on student' and teacher strategies in English Foreign Language (EFL) context, strategies and terms in language classroom, and the values, after the teacher applying those strategies. In addition, in learning language there is an involvement

of the teacher and the students' interactions, action and response in different situations as well as the contexts. Grossi believed that classroom is a domain for pragmatic instruction happen (2009:53) [3].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Politeness

Several researches on politeness is related to Grice (1975), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) [4] [5] [6]. Those developed basic theory of politeness. Each participant in a communication is endowed what called as face. Face is a picture of self-image in the social attributes. In other words, the face means honor, self-esteem, and public self-image.

Based on Goffman's notion of face, the main core of Brown' and Levinson's theory is face saving. In a communication, each participant has two needs in every social process, in particular the need to be appreciated and the need to be free. Politeness occupies a central place in linguistic pragmatics. Politeness is another level to conversational interaction besides the rules as follows (lakoff, 1975:88) [7]:

- 1) formality
- 2) hesitancy
- 3) equality

B. The Nature of EFL

Learners in Indonesia believe that the role of teachers as knowledge spreaders, skill instructor and problem solver. Jian Xiangqing in her research revealed that teacher in classroom doing certain categories (2010) [8]. Normally in EFL classrooms, teachers are unavoidable to correct what a student said, did, and wrote. Those activates involve a negative evaluation of a student's trying, a face-threatening act happens. When the student is asked to answer or to explain a certain question it has changed from questioning to threatening.

III. METHOD

This research was carried out at English Language Department. It deals with describing teacher and students' politeness strategies in speaking classroom. The participants are students in third semester. They were 19-20 years old. 30 students were involved in the research. The recording and observation are important in elaborating the discussion and finding the result. Mixed method is used for detail result on quantitative and qualitative data.

Moreover, the pragmatic analysis was applied in the research. It focused in students and the teacher's utterances in the 4 categories for the teacher based on Jiang Xiangqing's finding (2010). The four categories are as follows:

Table 1
Positive Politeness in the teacher's activities in
the classroom

No	Category	Utterance
1	Instruction	1. Let's begin our class 2. Today we will learn Section A 3. Could you please read?
2	Motivation	1. Would you like to answer this question? 2. Why don't you translate what you are thinking about the generation gap into English?
3	Evaluation	1. You all have done a wonderful job in new words 2. All of you have done a perfect job
4	Classroom Management	1. Now, please practice this structure 2. You, come here

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research revealed that both the students and the teacher used politeness strategies in overcoming FTA.

A. Politeness Strategies by the teacher

The teacher used English as the medium of instruction. Here are positive politeness strategies used by the teacher:

1) Academic instruction

In academic instruction covers teachers direct students' learning activity; the teacher's academic presentation, its response of students' question, and the teacher' corrective feedback.

Situation: the teacher came to class and would commence the lesson.

The teacher said "*Let's begin our class*" (S1,T1)

It employed positive politeness strategy because it sounds friendly to the hearer. Besides, it doesn't represent the gap between students and teachers.

Another positive politeness in EFL is about the teacher's question to the students. The situation is the teacher asked the students to read. The teacher's question "*Who would like to read new words to the class* (S15, T1). It is drawn as positive politeness strategy since the question gave an option to do something for the hearer.

It is concluded that the teacher used positive politeness strategy in academic instruction.

B. Motivation

Motivation conveys illocutionary acts aiming at provoking students in asking questions, giving opinion in discussion, creating feedback to the peers.

Situation: in presentation section, a student asked question about certain thing. Then, the teacher said "*Would you like to answer the questions?*" (S19, T1). The question shows that there is the speaker created an option to the students. Moreover, the use 'you' means there is no gap between students and the teacher. It is reduced social distance between them.

C. Evaluation

In evaluation brings about two essential elements on how the teacher evaluate the students. In addition, the utterances of the teacher can encourage as well as discourage the students.

Situation: the teacher asked the students to do the assignment on page 50. The teacher said "All of you done a perfect job" (S27, T1). The statement shows compliment from the teacher to the students.

It belongs to positive politeness strategy because it shows a good relationship between the teacher and the students. Besides, the teacher pictures her supportiveness.

D. Classroom Management

Classroom management covers disciplines of the instructions, directives (orders, requests, questions, and calls), and procedural direction and procedural directives.

The situation: in semi control practice section, the teacher devided the students into 6 groups. They had to do the assignment based on the theory, but suddenly a student moved from the group. The teacher said "Back to your seat, would you please continue the discussion?" (S 30, T1). It belongs to positive politeness strategy since it brings about students' awareness on their continuing the discussion as well as there is no gap on social distance because of the teacher used "you".

E. Politeness Strategies used by the students

Both students and the teacher used politeness strategies in EFL classroom. The strategies used by the students focus on 3 strategies. There are politeness strategies, negative strategies, and bald-on record strategies (Fig. 2).

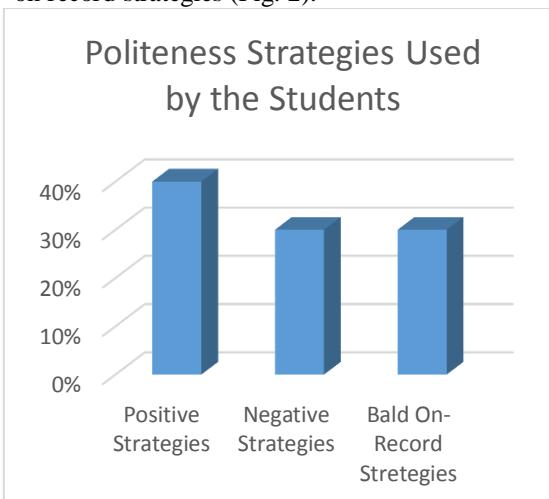


Figure 2 Politeness Strategies Used by the Students

The bar chart gives the information that the students had utterances employing 3 different strategies. The students tend to use positive strategies in the sections in their classroom. It is clear from the chart that students had 12 statements

using politeness strategies. Meanwhile, the percentages of negative strategies and bald on record strategies are at the same level, 30%. It means 9 utterances showing in both of the strategies.

Several situations caught in the observation such as in discussion, presentation, opening, and evaluation. Several used utterances are

"class" as group marker showing intimacy in positive strategies and "Ma'am" as personal marker representing intimacy. Conversely, negative strategies are intended to avoid giving offense by showing differences. The strategies found in the students' utterances such as the use of 'please', 'a little' to lessen the imposition by implying that the students were not asked to do very much. Likewise, the use of politeness marker expressing request' please'. The last stategies used by the students are bald on-record stategies. In this stategies, the students used imperative sentences reflecting command, instruction, and command in their discussion section.

F. Positive Values

During the observation, the researcher observed the students significant improvement on their attitudes on language. After the teacher used positive politeness strategies in EFL classroom in 4 categories, the result shows that the students present:

1. positive politeness in giving opinion in the discussion section;
2. to avoid direct expression of disagreement
3. to change instruction into awareness

Those language awareness in EFL in line with the theory of Lakof (1990) if speech act can be categorized as polite if the speech; (a) does not contain any speakers' vanity, b) gives the option to the speaker to do something, c) provide comfort and is friendly to hearer.

V. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is clear that, the teacher used positive politeness strategies in EFL, in 4 categories. Those categories are instruction, motivation, evaluation, and classroom management. Besides, the students applied politeness strategies such as positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, and bald on-record strategies. The percentage of utterances showing those strategies are 40% for positive politeness strategies, 30% for negative politeness strategies, the same number in bald on-

record strategies. Moreover based on the observation, those positive politeness strategies bring about positive values in EFL such as 1) the students' positive utterances in giving opinion, 2) students' avoidance of direct expression showing disagreement, 3) students' new perspective on changing instruction to awareness.

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