

CLOSING STRATEGIES CONVEYED BY THE ENGLISH TEACHERS

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Abstract

The present research is inevitable at revealing the types of closing strategies and the reasons of realizing those closing strategies by the teachers at one of private English courses in the Jambi City. Two English teachers engage in the research who coach students at the advanced and conversation classes. The data of the research are utterances produced by the research subjects (teachers) all through the classroom interactions. The utterances are assembled by means of a tape recorder and a pen-cam as the supporting instrument. Every single word is recorded by these two instruments (a tape recorder and a pen cam) conversely not all of the utterances are regarded as the data (data reduction process). Besides the two instruments mentioned, note-taking is too utilized in an attempt to get rid of bias of the research. The results of this research highlights nine genres of closing strategies uttered by the research subjects, namely positive comment (31 occurrences), excuse (12 occurrences), imperative to end (27 occurrences), blame (5 occurrences), goal (40 occurrences), summary (70 occurrences), an expression of thanks for the conversation (15 occurrences), plan (16 occurrences), and general wish (5 occurrences). Briefly, the cultural issue entirely have a consequence on the closing strategies realized by the research subjects.

Keywords: closing utterances, politeness, strategies

A. INTRODUCTION

Accommodating a good communication between teacher and student occasionally is hard to accomplish hence it needs a suitable strategy. A suitable strategy is remarkably demanded in an attempt to create the communication and classroom circumstance glowing. A teacher should be responsive of it or else he or she will hinder difficulty in carrying out a lesson.

In communication, a teacher typically brings into play opening and closing utterances. When an opening utterance is expressed, it signifies as a teacher is setting a lesson for students, such as greetings, offers, and so on. On the other hand, a teacher does not just stop talking and turning away from the topic of a lesson to another topic without explanation as an alternative he or she has to say something indicates that it is time to end the class. By selecting appropriate closing utterances, definitely students will not get confused, boring and/or misunderstanding of the topic being discussed. And that is why closing utterances are something that the teacher should be alert of.

In closing a lesson, it is not just a simple matter of uttering 'goodbye' other than an instructor necessity convey something for indicating that a class is dismissed. For this purpose, MEI English course (officially opened since May 2002) as the setting of the research with the believes that it may contribute adequate data for the investigation. The investigation further depict the *sort of* closing strategies realized by the research subjects and explain the *reason of* realizing those closing strategies in their communication with the novices.

B. THEORETICAL REVIEW

There is nothing new under the sun hence the theory which is drawn on the research is Coppock's (2005) closing strategy. Coppock has adapted Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategy focuses on *Positive* and *Negative* Politeness. Positive politeness strategy is recognized that a speaker has a desire to be respected in his/her communication. In negative politeness a speaker wants to be free in action and his/her mind is unrestricted. The speaker does not want losing the face but he/she only aside the face of the hearer.

In her theory, Coppock (2005) proposes closing strategy into: Positive, Positive and Negative, and Solidarity.

1. Positive Face-Saving Strategy

Positive politeness strategy is divided into three parts:

a. *Positive Comment:*

Positive comment implies that a conversation is enjoyable but the other does not want to continue, for example, 'It is nice talking to you'. The utterance shows that the speaker enjoys the conversation but when it is

going to be continued the speaker begin to feel boring or annoying, so the speaker uses this strategy to end the conversation.

b. Excuse:

It removes the implication that a speaker wants to end the conversation by providing an alternative motivation or an alternative explanation for a hearer's potentially face-threatening behaviour, for example 'I better get back to work'. The speaker tries to give a reason why he cannot continue the conversation (Coppock, 2005:3).

c. Imperative to End:

It is defined as a strategy which implies that the conversation must end. This strategy is more explicit than Excuse strategy because it uses imperative word to end the conversation. Although it uses imperative word, the speaker tries to save the hearer's face. The example of it is 'It looks like our time is up'. The speaker includes the hearer in his/her utterance by using the word 'our'.

2. Positive and Negative Strategies

Positive and negative politeness have four strategies:

a. Blame:

It is a form of Excuse in which the need to leave that ascribed to the other, for example: 'I know you are busy, so I let you get back to what you were doing'. The Blame presupposes that the other wants to end the conversation, not the speaker itself although the speaker who actually wants to end the conversation.

b. Goal:

This strategy also presupposes the same thing with Blame. Conversely, in this strategy the speaker signs that the other is likely to end the conversation, not her/him. The speaker gives a statement that the goal of the conversation has been reached, for instance 'I think we have talked long enough'. It implies that the conversation not to be continued. This construes ending as a desire of other, and is therefore a negative and also a positive politeness (2005: 4).

c. Summary:

It is used to end a conversation by summarizing the preceding discussion, usually in such a way as to indicate that the conversation has been successful and is therefore complete. If the other participant wants to end, he is now free to leave. Coppock adds that these strategies as negative politeness since the speaker appears to release the hearer from further conversational, and it is also categorized as positive politeness because the speaker positively evaluate the conversation as complete and resolved.

d. An Expression of Thanks:

This strategy presupposes that the conversation is an imposition on the other and it serves to minimize that imposition in a deferent manner, for example 'Thanks for calling'. This strategy is functions as a negative and a positive politeness, in that it implies that the conversation is worthwhile and perhaps enjoyable.

3. Solidarity Strategy

This strategy only relates to positive face because the speaker uses it to show his/her solidarity to the hearer. Coppock divides it into three types:

a. Plan:

Closing may include 'making arrangement' and that apply certain sort materials. This strategy implies that a speaker has a desire because he feels that the conversation is enjoyable but it has to be closed because of something, so the speaker uses this strategy to ensure that it will be continued in the future, for example. "See you on Monday." The Plan constitutes indirect strategy for saving the positive face of the other because he tries to desire the hearer.

b. General Wish:

It is aimed at repairing the solidarity threat posed by ending conversation. A speaker wishes good things for a hearer, for example 'Have a nice day'. This strategy does not imply anything about positive or negative politeness strategy but it relates to Brown and Levinson's definition of positive face.

c. Mentioning the Name:

A speaker uses this strategy to show that he/she has shared an interesting thing in the conversation, for example, 'Thanks Aminah'. Mentioning the name can also make the hearer happy because the hearer will feel that the speaker respects him/her.

C. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The design of this research is descriptive qualitative in order to analyze closing utterances of the research subjects. There are 8 subjects at MEI English Course coming from North Sumatera, South Sumatera, Central and East Java. Two teachers are proper for this study: they are Miss D as an Advance class teacher and Miss R as a Conversation class teacher. They are selected based on considerations, such as engagement during

the teaching learning process, fluent in speaking English, and knowledgeable. The data of the research are utterances realized by the research subjects. The data were collected through a tape-recorder, a pen-cam recording, classroom observation sheets (field notes).

The data were analyzed by the following steps:

Symbol	Name	Use
[text]	Brackets	Indicate the start and end point of overlapping speech.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single interrupted utterance.
(# of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in second of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micro pause	A brief pause usually less than 0.2 seconds.
. or ↓	Period or Down Arrow	Indicates falling pitch.
? or ↑	Question Mark or Up Arrow	Indicates rising pitch.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
-	Hyphen	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
>text<	Greater than/Less than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech is delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Less than/Greater than symbols	Indicates the enclosed speech is delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.
°	Degree symbol	Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech.
ALL CAPS	Capitalized text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
Underline	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of an utterance.
(hhh)		Audible exhalation
? or (.hhh)	High Dot	Audible inhalation
(text)	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
((italic text))	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

(Jefferson's 1984 transcription)

The entire collected data were transcribed by using Jefferson's transcription, though not all symbols were used for the identification of closing utterances. The symbols used for the research are Time Pause, Double Parentheses, Period or Down Arrow, and Question Mark or Up Arrow.

Subsequent to data transcription, they were read carefully to identify the closing strategies of the research subjects. The utterances were reduced for having non-lexical utterances such as too many 'mmm' and 'hhhh'. The role of situation, condition, intention, and cultural background of the subjects were considered to state the purpose of the research and draw the conclusions.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were 80 occurrences for **positive** face-saving strategies (positive comment 31, excuse 12, and imperative to end 27), 115 occurrences for **positive and negative** strategies (blame 5, goal 40, summary 70, expression of thanks 15), 21 occurrences for the strategy of **solidarity** (plan 16. general wish 5). Accordingly,

one strategy of solidarity which was not applied by the research subjects (mentioning the name). Considering the lack of space in writing the current paper, very few of the data are illustrated at this juncture.

- Miss. R : Do you know turn up?
 Students : ((*busy with their own business*))
 Miss. R : Okay, I think, you need the real example of turn up yeah? Let me make an example of turn up.
 Students : ((*making some noise*))
 Miss. R : Okay, we go on. So, what is turn up?
 Students : ((*thinking*))
 Student5 : Turn up tu muncul ya miss?
 Miss. R : Yeah, That's right. Like appear. Okay, we go on, appear is muncul.

Miss. R asked the students about the meaning of 'turn up'. However, there was no response from the students; accordingly, she decided to continue explaining it by giving an example. When she wanted to give the example, yet the students were busy with their own business. She repeated her utterance another time and finally there was a student gave the answer.

The utterance 'Yeah, that's right. Like appear' implies that Miss. R gave a good appraisal to student 5 since the student's answer was correct. The utterance the so-called a positive comment. From the utterance, it can be seen that Miss. R considered the face of the students so as to accomplish her need as well as the students' need. Her need was to get the answer from the students, and the student's need was to get to know whether or not her answer was correct. Further, 'Okay, we go on, appear is muncul' signed as Miss. R supported or accepted the student's answer.

The following excerpt concerns the conversation between Miss. D and Student 5:

- Student 5 : Miss, bisa baca ndak?
 Miss. D : Yeah, my eyes are still good
 Student 5 : Ndak gitu miss, tulisannya ndak jelas.
 Miss. D : No, it is good enough.
 Student 5 : ((*laughing*))
 Miss. D : Okay, you should pay attention to the spelling.

Miss. D asked her students to do a translation task. A student translated a text provided by herself. Right after that, Miss. D had a correction on the student's writing. The utterance 'Ok, you should pay attention to the spelling' inferred that the student's writing was still bad, particularly on spelling system so that the student needed to do some revising. The sense of conveying the utterance is as an implicit suggestion to the student in an attempt to minimize the FTA to both interlocutors, to be precise, Miss. D and student 5. This closing strategy is worth in order to keep the harmony between the two interlocutors.

Afterwards, the conversation happened in the interaction of three interlocutors as the quotation displays:

- Student1 and 2 : Go on miss go on (not well pronounced)
 Miss. R : Go on? Go on (say in good pronunciation)
 Students 1 and 2: Yeah miss
 Miss. R : Don't say go but go::: (say in well pronunciation)
 Students 1 and 2: go (say in good pronunciation)
 (The class becomes conducive)

The students were talking with their friends and laughing together. It made Miss. R had to leave out her explanation on the lesson. Right after that, the students stated to Miss. R to prolong the lesson, unfortunately, they inappropriately pronounced the word 'go' as a result it made the teacher annoyed.

'Don't say go but go:::' entailed that the instructor was annoyed to the students since they did not pay attention to her. Above and beyond, 'go' is a high frequency word; still they could not articulate it properly. The utterance is incorporated in Imperative to End as designated by 'don't' to stop the conversation or topic of the lesson. Another point was the utterance had a purpose of giving understanding and agreement to the students, and Miss. R sought the students to pursue it.

The converse prolongs to the preceding extract:

- Students : ((*making some noise*))
 Miss. R : Okay, the next (aaa) (# 3 seconds) how do you pronounce that?

- Students : Mana miss?
 Miss. R : Ought to?
 Student 5 : Ought to (wrong pronunciation)
 Student 3 : Ought to (wrong pronunciation)
 Miss. R : You desma?
 Student 2 : Ought to (wrong pronunciation)
 Miss. R : Actually the pronunciation is ought to (right pronunciation), long (o) in ought to suggest someone.
 Students : ((*still busy with their own stuff*))
 Miss. R : what's wrong with you my students? ↑ >You don't pay attention and don't know what we are talking about<

The teacher trained about 'ought to' to the students nevertheless they did not pay attention to the teacher. They were just busy with their own business. She asked the students to pronounce 'ought to'. However, almost all of the students mispronounced the 'phrase'. At the end of the lesson, the teacher conversed to the students with a rising intonation.

'What's wrong with you my students? You don't pay attention and don't know what we are talking about' was produced by the teacher to bear out her irritating feeling for the reason that the students did not pay attention on her over and over. Such the utterance is categorized into **Blame** with the combination of Positive and Negative strategies since the teacher did not blame a particular student as a reserve the whole class. She meant to lessen the FTA of the students. However, the raising intonation at the end of the utterance indicated the irritation of the teacher that she required all of the students to concentrate to the lesson.

The following excerpt depicts the Summary:

- Miss. R : The next is, would you mind if. I will read first and than you give the conclusion between would you mind and would you mind if. Okay?
 Students : Yeah miss
 Miss. R : Would you mind if I come, if I come to your house? Would you mind if my friend borrows your pen? Please see the difference first.
 Students : ((*Busy with their own stuff*))
 Miss. R : Okay, do you get the difference? You see the difference?
 Students : (hhhhmmmm)
 Miss. R : I mean the difference between could you mind and could you mind if?
 Students : ((*thinking*))
 Miss. R : You see from the meaning yeah?
 Student1 : Would you mind not tu...
 Miss. R : Would you mi:::nd and would you mind if? I want you to compare would you mind and would mind if?
 Student3 : >kalau would you mind tu ndak pake if<
 Student3 : (# 2 seconds) kalau ndak pake if pake ing
 Miss. R : Okay, I will make it simple. Would you mind is followed by geru:::nd or verb-ing and would you mind if is followed by sentences.
 Students : ((*listen*))
 Miss. R : Okay, "would you mind if" here is followed by sentences because there is subject "I" verb "come" "to your house" is the object. Do you mind if my friend borrows your pen? For the question after if you may not put the question also but the sentences.
 Students : ((*thinking and listen*))

Miss. R suggested the students to find out the differences between 'would you mind and would you mind if'. They did the teacher's instruction. After that, she explained the topic being discussed.

The evidence "Okay, 'would you mind if' is followed by sentences because there is subject 'I' verb 'come' 'to your house' is the object". "Do you mind if my friend borrows your pen? For the question after if you may not put the question also but the sentences". It signified that the teacher concluded the lesson after giving an explanation to the students. However, the students did not show their understanding to the summary made by the teacher; it was shown by the mimic of the students "(thinking and silent)". For sure this **Summary** is included into negative politeness as the teacher released the students from further conversation.

The next excerpt was realized by the teacher and the students as this:

- Miss. R : the fire brigade was also on alert incase the plane caught a fire.
You know incase?
- Students : No
- Miss. R : I will explain it (.) you stay here, incase I will go home late. Please
- Student 2 : Dak tau. Coba lagi miss
- Student 6 : Sepertinya. Mungkin (The bell is ringing)
- Miss. R : ahh. The bell rings. Ok. Thank you for your coming today and we meet next week.

The core of the conversation is 'in case' produced by Miss. R. As the students did not familiar with the words, she intended to offer another description anyhow suddenly the bell rang (she had to close the class).

'Thank you for coming to day' confirmed by the speaker in order to show a delightment to the hearers as the bell rang. The utterance entailed an implication where in the lesson was worthwhile and perhaps enjoyable for the teacher and the students. The teacher's intention was fulfilled hence she had completed the lesson well and vice-versa the students were contented in the lesson. For sure, the strategy reflected by the utterance is positive and negative politeness stressing on *expression of thanks*.

A simple citation means more for the shake of politeness as follows:

- Miss. R : Ok, thank you for coming today. See you on next meeting and bye-bye and have a nice day.

'See you on next meeting' is categorized as **Plan** in solidarity strategy. The teacher uttered this strategy to close the class. The evidence too illustrated that she made a promise with the students to get together again and continued the lesson. It constitutes an indirect strategy for saving the positive face of the students and the speaker herself.

Here is the example of General Wish:

- Miss. R : Ok, thank you for coming today. See you on the next meeting and bye-bye and have a nice day.

The utterance "*have a nice day*" was spoken by Miss. R to end the presentation and wish good things. It constitutes as a General Wish in Solidarity strategies due to Miss. R made a positive face as the wish for the students.

Possible Factors that May Affect the Closing Strategies

The research subjects are from different cultural backgrounds. Miss. R is from Palembang and Miss. D is from Batak Toba. According to Itryah on his paper 'Konflik Persaingan Dalam Keluarga Suku Palembang; Temu Ilmiah Nasional 2012 Fakultas Psikologi Unika Atma Jaya Jakarta', Palembang ethnic is selfish, talkative, hard characters, and easy to get along with new people. And based on the observation conducted during the research, those characters are in Miss. R. While for the characteristic of Batak Toba ethnic, the theory borrows from Silaban on her paper 'Konsep Harga diri dalam sastra Batak Toba Dan Sastra Kebijaksanaan Israel' saying that the Batak Toba ethnic likes talking about something which has relation to life, likewise phrases, sayings, rhymes, philosophy, and song lyrics. Batak Toba ethnic also has hard character and talks firmly. These characteristics were easy to be seen by the researchers in Miss. D.

E. CONCLUSION

Nine types of closing strategies conveyed by the teachers at MEI English course, namely: **positive comment, excuse, imperative to end, blame, goal, summary, an expression of thanks, plan, and general wish**. The highest occurrence is the **summary** strategy. In addition, the cultural factors might affect one or two closing strategies expressed by the research subjects. In brief, the research subjects have mutual respects to their students indicated by the number of closing strategies conveyed by them and since this research is conducted in an educational setting, the most used strategy is the summary.

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