



The Use of Politeness Strategy in EFL Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Politeness is essential in maintaining communication, showing respect for others, and building communicative interactions and positive atmospheres between speakers. The importance of politeness strategies in classroom interactions has been widely discussed to determine their positive influence on student performance during teaching and learning activities. This article aims to identify the types and forms of politeness strategies used by both teachers and students in EFL classes and analyze the challenges and opportunities for implementing effective politeness strategies in EFL classes. This study uses a descriptive-qualitative approach with an interpretation approach to data in the form of speech from teachers and students. Data sources are phrases and sentences in all interactions and teaching and learning activities in English language course classes. Data were collected through classroom observations at EFL English courses for junior high schools in Yogyakarta. The techniques used in data collection were direct classroom observation, listening, and taking notes. The collected data were re-validated by re-watching the recording of the learning in the class and checking the data using the transcription method. The data were analyzed by identifying the types of politeness that emerged from the speech used by teachers and students in interacting. The indicated types of politeness expressions were then classified into types of politeness. The classified data were then further interpreted in the pedagogical context and its influence on the learning process and outcomes. The results of the data analysis and interpretation showed the potential and challenges for teachers in utilizing politeness strategies to encourage student performance in English learning classes.

Keywords: *EFL classroom, politeness, strategy*

INTRODUCTION

In terms of functionality, politeness is considered an essential factor in establishing good interaction due to the nature of politeness, which avoids clashes and conflicts among the speakers. Wong & Esler (2020) explain that in a social context, politeness is an essential aspect of maintaining good social, and interpersonal relationships and holds specific-vital roles in everyday communication. Leech (1983) mentions politeness as a strategy to avoid conflicts which can be measured by the level of effort made by the speakers. Thus, politeness strategies should be considered since, in every conversation, the speakers should be able to use effective language and strategy to express their thoughts clearly. Thomas (1995) said that politeness deals with

how a particular form of language is used strategically to achieve the speaker's goal. Politeness is defined by Brown & Levinson (1987) both in general and narrow contexts. Politeness is generally interpreted as using different approaches and perspectives to get a form of politeness. Meanwhile, in a narrow context, it can be defined as the choice of communication strategies to minimize the discomfort of interlocutors.

But in practice, during real interaction and conversation, it is not that easy to define the standard of politeness in language itself, due to the social and cultural differences that make the politeness interpretations and standards vary in different contexts of the language users. As argued by Watts (2003), politeness is not something we are born with, but something we have to learn and be socialized into. Thus, politeness can't be seen as something rigid because the characterization of politeness and impoliteness is always constructed socially. The likelihood of differences between one culture to another culture in expressing politeness is very likely in many forms of communication. Alakrash & Bustan (2020) mention that the usage of 'politeness strategies' is one of the most essential utilizations of language in interaction which is very likely to also differ from one language to another, and not just from one culture to another.

Politeness has been investigated for decades in various contexts, including education practices. Many researchers have investigated politeness, especially the correlation between the strategy used and the impacts on the subject and the learning process. Politeness is a necessary field of study since it is believed to enhance learning by providing a friendly learning environment in the classroom and helping teachers during the learning activity (Jiang, 2010; Zaenul, 2016). In the Politeness strategy, the discussion focused on the spoken discourse pattern among language users. In the context of a highly cultural country like Indonesia, politeness in interaction is maintained as one of the good behaviors that both students and teachers must show and becomes one of the factors affecting the interaction in the classroom. The importance of focusing on politeness is emphasized by Rahayuningsih, et al (2020) through their research on the realization of politeness for classroom interaction. According to Rahayuningsih, et al (2020), politeness has become one of the crucial issues in education, specifically in classroom interaction. Furthermore, Santoso & Nuraini (2021) explain that in the context of teaching, to influence the students to speak politely, teachers need to speak politely. To keep the classroom situation interactive during language teaching, the use of politeness strategies should be taken into account. Latrech & Alazzawie (2023) add the urgency of politeness strategies in the classroom as a very important factor in keeping the classroom from failing pragmatically.

As a culturally diverse country, Indonesia positioned politeness as one of the crucial elements in conversation. The culture and customs of Eastern and Indonesian habits require its society to communicate politely in any context or situation. As Kardana, et al (2018) proves in their research about the creation of politeness in Indonesian communication, it is proven that Indonesian as one of the languages that do not have a language level also has certain strategies to express politeness in communication. The strategies include the use of indirect speech acts, person deixis, proper nouns, formal forms, and particular passive verbs (Kardana et al, 2018). On the other hand, the process of language acquisition and learning involves the necessity of using the language with the entire linguistics competence attached to the target language, so politeness in English also becomes necessary for students to be understood. The roles of teachers are then crucial in making sure the students are aware of the cultural factors that differ in the concept of politeness in their mother tongue and in English. Linguistics competence in the context of a complex, globalized

environment presents a new challenge for language educators (Wong & Esler, 2020). In the context of Indonesia, the English verbal politeness of EFL students might be influenced by local culture related to their mother tongue or their national language (Nursanti, et al, 2023). That means the concept of politeness in English may face some changes and adaptation because of the multilingualism and multicultural context of Indonesia.

Since the value of collectivity is dominantly substantial in Indonesia, it is naturally constructed in society to push members of society to follow the current norms and cultural rules. Someone who speaks impolitely will probably get a confrontation or verbal warning. In the worst scenario, those individuals will be excluded from society because they are labeled "impolite". Even though the standard of politeness and impolite might be different from one area to another area and is socially constructed, Saputra, et al (2021) explains that in general, politeness is defined as social propriety, which is an act where a person shows regular behavior and respects others in accordance with the norms prevailing in society.

Similar rules applied in the Indonesian education system, teachers and students are expected to have a mutual relationship regarding respecting each other and using proper and polite language in conversation. Politeness strategy is vital because of this cultural restriction and because rudeness could create conflict between teachers and students. Ginitng & Pasaribu (2023) mention that politeness needs to be in classroom interaction to be applied to build a good relationship and comfortable communication between teacher and students, as well as to avoid possible conflict in the classroom. Another urgency to use an effective politeness strategy in a classroom context is because the impact of language in the classroom will influence the whole learning activity and students' performance. It affects how students think about school and their perspective toward the lesson, which will lead to their performance in English. Since politeness is directly related to how others perceive our intentions, it is crucial to building communication.

The studies of politeness strategies have been conducted in many social contexts, including the teacher-student relation in classroom activity. Unfortunately, the scope of the studies usually only focused on analyzing expressions and types of politeness strategy. Most politeness strategy analysis is intertwined with one specific subject of research or field. Politeness strategies analysis is done to analyze the direct oral phenomenon and other forms where communication occurs. Politeness strategy research specific to finding the politeness pattern in Indonesian culture was conducted by Nursanti & Wijaya (2023) and Kardana et al (2018), which found that there are particular strategies in communication and conversation used among Indonesian EFL learners to show the prioritization of collectivist culture as the standard of politeness in Indonesia. Furthermore, research on politeness taking the context of EFL classrooms is growing among linguistics and academia nowadays. Alakrash & Bustan (2020) found that there are different strategies used by Malay and Arab students to express politeness during classroom interaction. A similar pattern was also found in Iraqi EFL classrooms analyzed by Salman & Betti (2023), and Thai intermediate-level EFL learners studied by Pan (2022).

Furthermore, the recent research on politeness strategies in EFL speakers often shows similar results in terms of the dominant strategy used by the speakers, negative strategy in politeness is often mentioned as one of the most common types of strategy in order to meet the standard of politeness. Salman & Betti's (2020) research shows that Iraqi EFL learners use more negative politeness strategies when communicating with lecturers. Among social communication, Iraqi EFL learners also use different

politeness strategies based on the proximity level of the friendships with their speaking partner. The use of a more negative politeness strategy is also proven by Pan (2022), the research finding shows that Thai- intermediate-level EFL students use negative politeness at the highest frequency compared to another strategy. It is found that the various expressions involved as negative strategies are also used by Thai EFL students to emphasize the prioritization of indirectness in conversation. Latrech & Alazzawie (2022) expand their results of research into two categories of EFL learners, young learners and adult learners. These two categories of age show different tendencies of politeness strategy used. The younger learners are indicated to be perceived as expressing a more positive face, while the older learners use a more negative politeness strategy. In terms of the framework to identify politeness strategies, this research has the same framework as the previous studies done by Latrech & Alazzawie (2022) and Salman & Betti (2020) who use the Brown and Levinson (1987) framework for politeness strategies.

The previous studies on classroom politeness operate on the level of utterance analysis and classification of politeness strategies without necessarily expanding the discussion into the role of politeness in the teaching-learning activity and how it might positively affect the student's academic performance. Thus, similar to other previous studies on classroom politeness, the analysis of politeness took place in a social-cultural context only. Even though the authors try to explain why certain strategies were dominantly used, the analysis could have been more comprehensively explained, especially in a pedagogical context.

This research fills that gap by analyzing not only the utterances used and classifying into which category of politeness strategy but also how the use of politeness strategy could be maximized to support and improve students' performance. Furthermore, this research will be more practical by contextualizing politeness strategy as a vital factor in the classroom and not only a sociocultural phenomenon.

Politeness strategy and its importance

Many experts have proposed politeness theory in pragmatics. In general definition, politeness is defined as a desire to protect the self-image of the speaking person. (Brown and Levinson (1987). In politeness, it is assumed that every human has a 'face,' and each of us wants to save or keep the good image of this face. This is directly related to Face Acts theory in politeness. Politeness strategies usually counted as another types of speech acts, which function as a tool to express concern for others and minimize threats to self-esteem or self-image in certain social contexts. In interaction, both sides are expected to save each other's face by maintaining the principles of politeness.

In communication, individuals are expected to know how the other person would like to be responded to. As Scollon and Scollon (2014) argue that minimizing communication's ambiguity can be done by making assumptions about the partner of our interaction. Similar perspectives of politeness are also proposed by Yule (2006). Yule (2006) explains that 'politeness' means showing awareness of another person's face, and that can be achieved in either social distance or closeness between the individual involved in conversation. Yule (2006) argues that people use politeness to show the individual's perspective and awareness toward other people. Comparatively, Watt (2003) explains that politeness involve the combination of language and forms of language behavior, thus becomes the heart of social communication as well as the reproduction of social structure. According to his concept, linguistic politeness and what so he called as 'politic behavior' are two components that we study, which relies

at the socio-communicative interaction. The emphasize of cultural and language aspects from Watt (2003) is actually open the similar ground of understanding the diversity of politeness, which behavior consider 'polite' or 'impolite'.

According to face acts theory, a politeness strategy is important to lessen the risk of conflict, which in Brown and Levinson works mentioned as 'face threats'. The conflict usually occurs because both or one of the speakers did not consider other politeness aspects and probably did not realize that it is perceived as 'impolite' by the other speaker. Brown and Levinson (1987) had already proposed a framework of the face in their politeness study; it is believed that humans usually have two kinds of faces: negative and positive. Positive politeness is used to appease the positive face of the speech partner or the listener, conforming to the listener's desire to be accepted by associating them as a person having close relationship with the speaker. This is supported by Yule (2006), who explains that positive politeness leads the listener or requester to appeal to a common goal, in friendship or relationship through certain expressions. In many cultures that prioritize positive politeness, people tend to maintain other people's faces by actively responding and giving some things for them in conversation, one of the responses is by leading and initiating the ongoing interaction.

Comparatively, a negative strategy in politeness occurs in a situation where the speaker attempts to lower the imposition on the listener's negative face. On the other hand, the speaker appreciates the addressee's negative face and tends to not intervene that negative face with his action. Pennington (2013) says that people seek to maintain other people's face by keeping out of their way and giving them space in negative politeness strategies.

Therefore, politeness can be understood as a set of strategies used by individuals in interaction, which is highly affected by communicative situations. Holmes (2006) argues that the communicator will be able to make a good impression on the interlocutor and build a positive self-image or, vice versa, expand his/her personal space (Holmes, 2006). This article focuses on the four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) as the main fundamental theory to identify types of politeness during the class. The classification of strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) is based on how certain language functions are used to protect participants' faces. The strategies are as follows:

Positive politeness strategy

The main goal of positive strategy in politeness is to address and maintain the positive face of the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), to save other people's positive faces, we can express utterances that make them feel comfortable and appreciated. Positive politeness is important to maintain a good relationship between the speaker and the hearer. There are three main types of positive strategy: (1) Assert the common ground; (2) Reveal the cooperation between the speaker; (3) Accomplish the hearer's wants for some X. These three types are distributed more specifically into 15 strategies of politeness in Brown and Levinson's classification. The example of positive politeness strategies can be seen from the following utterances:

- You did amazing work on your paper, I appreciate it so much (showing gratitude)
- Would you please help me arranging the schedule (requesting)

Negative politeness strategy

Different from positive politeness, negative politeness can be defined as the strategy to redress action and to save the hearer's negative face. A negative strategy is

performed by allowing the hearer's freedom to act out certain actions. In the social context, negative strategy usually occurs when a social distance exists between the speaker and the hearer, and this distance appears in an asymmetrical position between the people involved in a conversation. There are ten strategies in negative politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), and they are distributed into different functions as follows: expressed in showing respect to the hearer, conveying pessimism, being indirect, using hedges, expressing doubt, and reducing imposition.

The example of negative politeness strategies can be seen from the following utterances:

- "Your voice is a bit low, I couldn't hear you" (requesting indirect instruction)
- "Sorry it's on the response column, the second one" (pointing out mistake)

Bald On Record

Bald On Record is considered the most direct strategy in politeness compared to other strategies since it brings the effort to save another's face in a clear, unambiguous, and concise way. Whenever the speaker wants to perform any FTA with maximum efficiency and is beyond his desire to appease the listener's face, the Bald on Record strategy will be used. (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Bald on Record falls into two categories; non-minimization of face threat and cases of FTA-oriented Bald on record usage. The speaker uses a bald-on strategy to make the actual message delivered to the hearer without misinterpretation. Bald on strategy usually occurs in conversation within the following context of an event; farewell, inviting, and welcoming. Below are the examples of Bald-On Record strategies used in utterances:

- "Do not use your mobile phone" (directly give warning)
- "And you can choose whichever situation you want" (directly instructing)

Off-Record

In the off-record strategy, the speaker usually expresses something truly off or irrelevant from the actual meaning. Thus, this strategy is labeled as the most polite strategy among other strategies in politeness. In the off-record strategy, the speaker is expected to avoid the responsibility for the potentially face-damaging meaning and interpretation. The meaning of off-record strategy refers to another referent outside of the context inside the dialogue itself. The examples of Off-Record strategy can be seen from the following examples:

- "The task is as easy as flipping the hand, you should get all of them correct" (indirect, using metaphor)
- "It's part of the students' responsibility to do the homework right?" (indirect, using rhetorical question)

Teaching and learning process in EFL context

It is crucial to contextualize how the teaching-learning process is conducted in EFL countries before justifying the importance of the politeness strategy within it. In EFL countries, English is taught in formal schools as a subject. Unfortunately, due to the latest regulation regarding English lessons for elementary schools in Indonesia, public elementary schools are no longer required to involve English as a compulsory lesson. In most countries that put English as a foreign language, the position of English itself still needs to be prioritized among other lessons.

Furthermore, since English is a foreign language, exposure to English is very minimal. Teaching and learning activity only occur mostly in classrooms rather than just in daily, casual communication, except for private-bilingual-based schools. Moreover, the teaching-learning process in the classroom usually relies on the coursebook and teachers' ability to deliver the materials. Most English class in EFL countries goes to teacher-centered activity, where teachers dominate the learning process and become the main actors that handle almost everything in the classroom. Students rely on the teacher's explanation and instruction during the whole lesson. An English teacher is expected to efficiently hold two roles at the same time in such a classroom: (i) Teaching English accurately and correctly; (ii) creating an interesting learning process to engage students more during classroom activity (Kassing, 2011).

English teachers are expected to master the ability to manage the classroom and deliver the lesson creatively and engagingly so the students will not be bored. According to Sulistiyo (2009), several factors are affecting English teaching and causing difficulties among EFL classrooms in Indonesia. First, EFL teachers are facing considerably large classes consisting of 30–40 students. In the extreme case where the number of teachers is lacking in some schools, a class can be attended by more than 50 students. The definition of a 'large' class in language learning might be varied (Wright, 2005), but this number is considered as a big challenge and becomes one of the factors that makes the learning situation not effective. A large class is not ideal for a language classroom since it will be harder for the teacher to create a more close and intimate learning atmosphere with their students. Second, the students are not highly motivated. That may be caused by the compulsory force given by the school and curriculum who place English as a mandatory subject, meaning students must learn the language to achieve a certain standard of score in order to pass the class. That becomes a problem because their exposure to English is not that massive, in Indonesia commonly English is taught only for approximately two to four hours per week.

Since politeness strategies are closely related to the social context of the speakers, then it is mandatory to look at the characteristics of students in EFL countries. English is not their first language, so the motivation to learn English might vary. Some students learn English to pass the exam, and some learn English just because their parents told them to do so. One of the possible reasons for this phenomenon is that the students need help to directly see the urgency of learning another country's language. They rarely use it in real-life activities. The lack of awareness in learning English also leads to a minimum internal motivation. Even though some students might be highly motivated in English class, the number of this type of students is insignificant compared with those with lower motivation. Minimum motivation and short learning hours become obstacles for both teachers and students.

Third, the focus of English class in many schools and universities is on reading skills and comprehension (Sawir, 2005; Setiyadi, 2001; Sugirin, 1999), along with less emphasis on English grammar and vocabulary. Sugirin (1999) believes that this tendency exists based on the assumption that students' ability in English is reflected through their understanding of the English grammar and structure, accompanied by adequate number of vocabulary mastery. One of the biggest consequences from that phenomenon is that teaching other skills—such as speaking, writing, and listening—is relatively ignored or less prioritized.

Such a situation gives us a clear portrayal of how communication is really important. Those three difficulties can be mitigated if teachers master communication and use the correct approach for the students within that characteristic. To have good communication skills is not only for teachers' performance but also for how this

communication can attract students in ELF countries. Teachers' language and instruction will be among the strongest components among other influencing factors that affect students' attitudes in the English classroom. Two basic elements that are important to be considered by teachers in making communication in an EFL classroom are sociocultural background and students characteristics.

The cultural background which positions politeness and distance between the older and the younger in Indonesia allows teachers to be seen as someone 'higher' than the students. In the Indonesian schools' context, where education is so much affected by the communal value of society, teachers are required to use and behave like how the culture rules them to be. It is proven by the use of an address system in Indonesian schools where it will be impolite for students to call their teacher without addressing Mrs. (*Ibu* in Bahasa), or Mr. and Sir (*Bapak* or *Pak* in Bahasa), while in most western countries sometimes it is okay if children directly call their teachers' name when they call them. Indonesia also has adopted some communal agreements as the 'norm.' To conceptualize such culture, teachers should use proper and effective politeness strategies intertwined with a good cross-cultural understanding.

Student's characteristics also play important roles in creating effective communication during the teaching and learning process. As the one who is obliged to transfer knowledge and new information to the students, it is almost impossible for teachers to diminish the importance of understanding students' behavior and characteristics. Teachers must understand how students learn a language and the factors that probably distract them. According to Howitz and Luo (2009), three major learner characteristics have consistently proven crucial for language learning: motivation, anxiety, and beliefs about language learning.

Motivation involves the reasons and internal push that learners have for learning a language. For example, some learners learn the language simply because of a language requirement or just to pass the class, while others expect to use it in their future careers. As mentioned above, motivation is also one of the biggest challenges for EFL teachers. English teachers need to know the motivation of students to learn English. If they are not motivated, the teacher's job is to increase their motivation slowly. This is in line with Carniasih's (2011) statement that using appropriate politeness strategies will motivate the students. Thus, classroom interaction between teachers and students should be maintained in good relationships.

Anxiety in the context of language learning is often notified by some uncomfortable feelings that occur during the learning process or when using a new language in practice. Horwitz, et al (2009) explains that several studies found that approximately 1/3 of American foreign language learners experience anxiety in response to language learning. This language anxiety is a common issue faced by many students learning a new language that is foreign to their mother tongue. Most anxious language learners feel uncomfortable speaking or listening to a new language. This can be understood because, for students in EFL countries, English is something very new to them, they are unfamiliar with it, and of course, feelings of anxiety will be common to be experienced by them. It takes sensitivity from the teacher to detect the anxiety of students. Suppose teachers find some students reluctant to speak or try to do the exercises in English. In that case, the teacher should never directly negatively judge them and blame them for being lazy and incapable of following the class phase.

Once the students understand their feelings, the teacher can create and prepare an effective approach to them, starting from choosing positive politeness strategies to encourage them in classroom activities. Addressing motivational and appreciative words can be an example of applying a positive politeness strategy to counter students'

anxiety in the English classroom. Anxiety might also be caused by the different abilities of each individual to bear the classroom or teacher pressure. Some students might directly get down mentally once they feel that their teacher does not appreciate their answer or once they see their friends laugh when they try to speak in English. Here is where the politeness strategy takes place. Besides having good classroom management, teachers are also expected to be able to produce instructions that can cater to these students' insecurities in order to create a healthy and effective classroom environment.

Another crucial characteristic is belief. Beliefs about language learning influence how students approach language learning and the strategies they choose to use. For example, many language learners think English is too hard for them. The belief in language will be affected by sociocultural aspects too. However, a foreign language teacher should be able to counter such dominating beliefs that might lead to ineffective ways of learning. The issues about students' beliefs can also be countered using a correct and efficient politeness strategy. Using some approach that is not hurting their old belief shows that in learning English, they are free to express themselves no matter what they thought about English previously. Encourage the students to make them feel secure and comfortable by using appropriate interaction.

METHODS

This research was conducted using a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. According to Fraenkel, J. R. and Wallen (1993), descriptive-qualitative research investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. The data is taken from the utterances used by the teacher and students in a recorded online English classroom conducted in a zoom meeting. Seven high school students, grades 8 and 9, attend the class. The class observed is an hour, and the topic taught is the expression of compliments in English.

The utterances were taken from both students and teachers, following the steps as follow: (1) Transcribing the utterances that occur, (2) classifying types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), (3) Analyzing and describing the possible cause for the occurrence of certain strategies and how it affects the classroom interaction, (4) Calculating the percentage of each strategy occurred, (6) Drawing the line between the results with the possible teaching method. The data were analyzed by listing down the transcribed utterances from the recording.

The data were analyzed by separating each utterance by both students and teachers during the teaching and learning activity. In total, there are 90 utterances being analyzed. Each of the utterances is carefully identified based on the meaning and function of each utterance. From the meaning, the data were categorized to the types of politeness based on the pragmatic and literal meaning produced by the utterance. The data were also analyzed based on the function of the utterance, for example whether the utterance is instructional, or requesting, thanking, appreciating, responding, or other functions intended by the speakers.

Data credibility can be maintained through multiple data collection processes; namely direct observation of how the data appears naturally in classroom teaching and learning practices, as well as ensuring its accuracy through direct transcription checks of the class recordings. Then the author classifies types of politeness strategies in each utterance by looking at the lexical unit from that sentence that contains the politeness strategies referring to types of strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987). The next step was grouping the utterances into three categories found: positive strategy, negative strategy, and bald on strategy. The samples from each category were described following the theory of politeness from Brown and Levinson (1987) and discussed in

specific classroom contexts and situations. Finally, the findings were discussed within the framework of teaching methods to propose a specific technique to maximize politeness strategies in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

From the data analysis, three out of four types of politeness strategies proposed by (Brown & Levinson, 1987) were found during the classroom activity; Positive politeness, Negative politeness, and Bald on strategy. From 90 utterances analyzed, the final percentage shows the domination of the positive politeness strategy and the absence of the Off-record strategy.

Table 1. Percentage of politeness strategies used.

Types of strategies	Number of occurrences	Percentage
Positive Politeness	59	65.5%
Negative Politeness	16	17,8%
Bald On	15	16,7%
Total of strategies	90	100%

According to Table 1, positive politeness is the primary strategy used with more than 50% occurrence. Based on the observation from the recording, positive politeness was mostly shown by the teacher to express her friendliness towards the students. Since the teacher is a new teacher in their class, and that was their first meeting, the urgency for the teacher to show a more positive politeness strategy was increased to create a good impression on her new students. Meanwhile, the absence of an Off-record strategy is potential because of the relationship between the students and the teacher, which still needs to be established since this is their first time meeting together in an online class, so it might hinder the students from expressing the off-record strategy. Each strategy will be analyzed in more detail and intertwined with the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson.

Positive politeness strategy

Positive politeness strategy aims to help the speaker maintain good relations and friendliness with the hearer, which in this context were the students. Moreover, since this is the first meeting for the teacher to teach these students, the teacher wanted to build social relationships with the students. Four utterances were taken as the sample to show the positive politeness strategies that occurred. The explanation of each utterance will be elaborated further as follows:

Sample 1.

Teacher: ***So how was school?***

Students: *Fine*

From the sample above, the teacher intends to build a friendly environment and show her care to her new students. The teacher tried to send a message that she wants

to know the students deeper by asking how their day at school was, by asking "So how was school" the teacher already expresses a positive politeness strategy, which is also positively responded to by the students who respond by answering "Fine" altogether. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when the speaker expresses a question or utterance that shows their desire to get to know something from the hearer, it is categorized as the positive politeness strategy classified as Strategy 1, noticing category.

Noticing is perceived as happening because the speaker tries to attend to the hearer's situation or condition. In this context, the teacher noticed that the students joined her class in the afternoon and knew the context that the students mostly just came home not so long ago. By noticing that, the teacher tries to build up the topic by asking about the student's day at school.

Sample 2.

Teacher: **What time did you get home**”

Student: *Twelve, forty-five*”

A similar pattern was shown in sample 2 above. The teacher still tried to express caring for the student's condition by asking about the time they got home. The positive politeness identified in this sample is categorized as Strategy 1 in Brown and Levinson's (1987) classification. Strategy 1 in positive politeness focuses on showing that the speaker notices something from the hearer, which is the students' condition in this context. The students took the role of the hearer in this interaction context since they were the teacher who asked them.

Sample 3.

Teacher: **Let's have a prayer first.**

Student: *Yes miss*

From sample 3 above, different types of positive politeness strategies were identified. The teacher tried to invite the students to do a specific activity together and express an instruction to be done by the students. In sample 3, the positive politeness strategy used is claim reflexivity, strategy 12, in which the speaker includes both the speaker and the hearer in the same activity. In this sample, the activity is praying together. In the classroom context, this strategy functioned as a way for the teacher to motivate and move the students to do the intended activity. This strategy is one of the most common strategies used in classroom teaching and learning activity because teachers usually want to give instruction but do not want to make it sound too bossy or demanding.

Sample 4.

Student: *Umm ten minutes ago, my connection is not really well so I can't, hear anything, that's why my camera is also off miss*

Teacher: **Oh I see. I'm sorry about that, but can you hear me clearly now?**

Student: *Yes I can*

Teacher: *Okay, and thank you for telling me that*

In sample 4, there are two expressions of positive politeness said by the teacher; expressing empathy and understanding. It can be seen that the teacher tried to position herself as someone who understood the unfortunate situation one of the students faced.

When the teacher said she was sorry about the trouble, the positive politeness used is in line with strategy 15 in Brown and Levinson (1987), categorized as giving gifts to the hearer. The gifts can be goods, sympathy, understanding, and cooperation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In a classroom situation, it is essential for the teacher not just to keep giving instructions and never engage with the unfortunate event experienced by the students. Showing that we understand their difficulties will give a sense of comfort to the students, which later will make them feel like the teacher is someone they can rely on when bad things happen.

Negative politeness strategy

In a context where the speaker and the hearer's relationship is not that close, which means there is a social distance between them, the tendency for a negative politeness strategy to occur is increased. Negative politeness caters to the negative face wants of the addressee and is most typically displayed through apologizing for any impossible imposition (Wardhaugh, 2015). Besides apologizing, there are various expressions included as a negative strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a negative politeness strategy can be expressed in the form of; hedging, questioning, and showing disagreements. Below are three samples of negative politeness strategies:

Sample 5.

Teacher: *How about you Shanessa?*

Student: *I'm fine* *Student's voice is unclear

Teacher: ***Your voice is a bit low, I couldn't hear you***

From sample 5, it can be identified that the teacher used a negative politeness strategy throughout her response. When the teacher said that she could not hear the student very well, it meant that the student should repeat her answer louder than before. Indirectly, by stating that response, the teacher imposed the indirect request to the students. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), indirect instruction or request is classified into Strategy 1 in negative politeness strategy, which is a conventionally indirect instruction. The indirectness expressed in sample 5 is shown by the pragmatic meaning of the utterance "I could not hear you," which asks the students to re-answer in a better and more audible voice.

Sample 6.

Teacher: *Gerald, can u say the next sentence?*

Gerald: *You look gorgeous today* *Student read incorrect sentence

Teacher: ***Sorry it's on the response column, the second one***

The negative politeness in sample 6 occurred when the teacher wanted to clarify that the students had made a mistake. The students needed to have understood the previous instruction and read the wrong sentence. From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher indirectly said that the students did not get the instruction correctly. Thus, by saying, "Sorry, it is on the response column, the second one," the teacher did not mean sorry as if she was apologizing for something but instead wanted to point out the mistakes made by the students. This indirect expression is in line with the outlined condition mentioned above about the concern if the speaker enters the communication correctly. In this situation, the teacher wanted the students to do the instruction correctly and read the correct sentence.

Sample 7.

Teacher: *I forgot to inform you that we are going to meet in the main room at 3.50*
I hope you finish your script by then, is that okay?

According to sample 7, one negative politeness strategy found is when the teacher expresses her wish toward the students regarding the task given. By saying, "I hope you finish.." the teacher sent a narrative that she wanted the students to finish the script, and the students must do that. Indirectness is identified because the teacher did not just express her wish but told the students to perform the task which has to be done. Similar to the analysis in sample 6, this is included as indirect instruction, thus classified as strategy 1 in the negative politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1987)

Bald-on record

Among other strategies, the Bald-On Record can be considered one of the most direct political strategies. That was because of the nature of the Bald On strategy, which allows and emphasizes the speaker not to attempt to minimize the face-threatening situation to the other people involved in that conversation. Concerning the last definition, many have argued that in this strategy, it is clear to see the social status and gap between the speaker. The social status that affects the occurrence of the Bald On strategy can be because of power relations between teachers and students, age differences, or simply because of customs and specific cultural values. Here is the sample of analysis for the Bald On strategy:

Sample 8.

Teacher: *And you can choose whichever situation you want*
I hope that's clear" pos, attend to H

Bald on strategy is identified in sample 8. More specifically, the teacher asked the students to choose and decide by themselves the task offered. This utterance is included as the Bald On strategy due to the direct-imperative meaning expressed by the teacher by saying those utterances. The dialogue happened when the teacher commanded the student to perform specific tasks. When the teacher said, "*you can choose whichever situation you want,*" she did not only offer options, but indeed, she wanted the students to do that immediately. Indirectly, the teacher instructed the students. Thus, this utterance is classified as the Bald On strategy since Brown and Levinson (1987) state that the Bald On strategy addresses a direct message to the hearer. The necessity to be direct is caused by the need to reduce misunderstandings between the speaker and the hearer. In this context, the teacher wanted to avoid misunderstanding by expressing her instruction directly.

Sample 9

Teacher: *I want each of you to read the dialogue*
Who wants to be Emma and who wants to be Ginny?

From sample 9 above, one expression of the Bald On strategy is identified. The teacher directly mentions the task that the students should do right at that moment by saying, "I want each of you to read the dialogue," as this is included as direct instruction, which reflects the intention of the speaker directly, and is said by the speaker who can impose specific demand due to the asymmetrical relation between teacher and student in a classroom context.

Sample 10.

Teacher: *Okay so that's all for today's meeting, I hope that helps you in any ways
Thank you all for joining this class*

The utterances in sample 10 were taken by the end of the class when the teacher wrapped up the class and said goodbye to the student. By saying, "Okay, so that is all for today's meeting," the teacher implied that she wanted to finish the class immediately. This is included as the Bald On record strategy because it shows that the speaker, the teacher, has greater power than the hearer, the student. That power is indicated by the teacher's capacity to decide when the class is over and announce it to the entire class. This utterance is also in line with the Bald On record strategy, which said that Bald On Record is oriented to face. Usually, it occurs in situations such as inviting, welcoming, or farewell.

Challenges and opportunities in implementing Politeness Strategies

According to the result of the research, it can be identified that cultural factors such as wisdom, respecting older people, and being submissive to the older affect classroom communication significantly. Besides the context where the students and the teacher have yet to build a close relationship, sometimes students feel reluctant to give expressive responses to the questions or instructions given by the teacher. This finding supports the result of study done by Latrech & Alazzawie (2022) which proves politeness strategies are very important to keep the classroom from pragmatically failing and should be able to incentivize the teachers to use politeness as a way to keep the students interactive during the classroom activity. Contrary to the previous studies that find many EFL learners use negative politeness strategy more frequently to keep the indirectness which is associated with more politeness, as mentioned by Pan (2022) as conventionally indirect strategy, this research shows more positive politeness strategy used by both the students and the teachers.

The reluctance from the students analyzed in this research shows that there might be some distances felt by the students. The distance between the students and the teacher contributes to the interaction that happens in a classroom. Arif et al. (2018) state that the relative social distance between the speaker and the addressee is one of the most fundamental factors determining politeness, aside from power and formality dimensions. Thus, to build a comfortable classroom atmosphere with effective interaction, teachers in EFL classrooms must break through that culture creatively through practical classroom approaches. Politeness strategies should be utilized as one of the tools to be considered in designing classroom approaches and techniques. Furthermore, strategies in politeness classified by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Grice's maxims in cooperative principle cover multiple expressions and functions of utterance that usually occur in classroom interaction so that teachers can modify and involve them in the instructional language used during the teaching-learning activities.

Many advantages will be achieved if teachers in EFL classrooms comprehensively understand the concept of politeness strategy and how to implement

it in the classroom. First, it enhances a better relationship between students and teachers. A good teacher not only seeks respect from the students but also how he/she can extend the classroom relationship to a closer relationship and maintain intimacy between students. It is important to build the intimacy among students and teachers due to the different power that both parties had, Rahayuningsih et al (2020) also found out from their research that in terms of power, the interaction between students and teacher show an asymmetrical power relation.

Second, it is also effective as a tool to avoid conflicts. The capability of choosing words and sentences will habituate teachers to be more sensitive and considerate in order to avoid negative thoughts or feelings in their students. The necessity to avoid conflict is crucial as it affects the internal motivation of the students, as well as the way they engage and communicate. Wong & Esler (2020) also agreed that appropriate politeness strategy is vital for everyday communication.

Thirdly, effective politeness strategies help teachers to build and habituate better ways of communication, especially in English. Using the correct strategy of politeness will be able to enhance the students to adjust their politeness strategies to meet the natural practice of politeness in English. Wong & Esler (2020) mentions that to prepare learners for effective communication in international contexts, it is necessary to establish how politeness is expressed in modern language and investigate how politeness practices are best taught and learned. Teachers who interact well with the students tend to have a better approach in communicating with the students based on the appropriate politeness in spoken English. Lastly, it is helpful to improve students' motivation and performance in the English classroom. Motivation and interest can be achieved if the teacher can use suitable and proper politeness strategies. Moreover, the excellent result of having more motivated students in the classroom is their performance in English.

CONCLUSION

The pedagogical implication of this research is that it can be proven that there are patterns in teacher and student English interaction in learning which can be used to support student performance in using communicative and natural English, as well as with appropriate politeness strategies. Throughout this research, it is hoped that teachers can be more aware of using politeness strategies and incorporate the use of politeness strategies to motivate and encourage student activity in the classroom. This implication is important so that politeness strategies are not only seen as material in English lessons but can be implemented naturally so that students can reach a better level of proficiency, especially in using English in communication.

The findings of this research show that there are four strategies of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) that occurred in a one hour English course for junior high school in Yogyakarta. The students who are EFL learners indicate some reluctance to express themselves during classroom activities. Meanwhile, the teacher is identified as not having a very close relationship with the students but tries to establish a friendly and comfortable environment by expressing mainly positive politeness strategies. This research can be wrapped up as follows; (1) The positive politeness strategy is the most used, with 59 occurrences. The positive strategy is mainly performed by the teacher in the form of notice-attend to students, thanking, appreciating, and showing interest to the students. Meanwhile, the negative strategy was found in 16 occurrences by the teacher. The negative strategy is mostly performed in the form of indirect instruction. This shows the teacher's interest in avoiding being too demanding or showing authoritarian behavior which may scare the students to come to her next class. Bald on

strategy occurs 15 times during the classroom activity. This strategy is dominantly performed by the teacher in the form of direct instruction, which the teacher uses to minimize misinterpretation.

There is no Off-record strategy found in this research. A possible cause for the absence of an off-record strategy is the setting and context of the class observed, where it was the first time the teacher met the students and handled the entire class. The off-record strategy may occur when the teacher and the student have a close relationship. Close relationships allow them to express something out of context. According to that analysis, it is nearly impossible for the student to express an off-record strategy in the first meeting with a new teacher. (2) The data from classroom observation shows the strong influence of culture and norms on politeness strategies expressed by the students and teachers in an EFL classroom. The social distance and asymmetrical power held by the teacher allow her to have a higher position in the classroom setting, thus proven by the occurrence of negative and bald-on strategy.

Furthermore, it also affects the way students react and respond. From the data, the students seem reluctant and still in doubt about expressing their true feelings freely. The intention of the teacher to build and maintain a good relationship with her new students is reflected through the number of positive politeness expressions that occur during the teaching-learning activities. The challenges and opportunities of using the politeness strategy to improve students' performance were discussed based on the findings and analysis. It is found that the main challenge faced by the teacher is the attachment to cultural norms that are firmly instilled in most EFL students. Meanwhile, to maximize classroom performance, the teacher must be creative in finding ways to incorporate the politeness expression during the class. The teacher can consider the politeness strategy used in the materials or teaching technique.

This research is limited in the small scope of objects, which only in the context of English language learning classes at junior high school level. There is a necessity to conduct further research that can measure more practices in using politeness strategies in the context of formal English learning in elementary schools, high schools and universities, so that it can provide a more reflective picture of the use of politeness strategies. In the long term, practical development from the results of using politeness strategies in schools can also be realized in the form of implementing certain teaching methods or teaching materials that can support the use of politeness strategies to improve student performance in English communication.

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