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AN INVESTIGATION OF POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES SERVED IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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Abstract

Politeness strategy is important for human beings because it can make harmonious interactions. This research deals with the uses of positive politeness in EFL classroom interaction. The aims of this research are: (1) to identify the types of positive politeness strategies used in EFL classroom interaction, (2) to identify the types of interlocutors' responses in receiving positive politeness strategies in EFL classroom interaction, and (3) to explain the interlocutor's response when receiving positive politeness strategies in EFL classroom interaction. This research employed a qualitative approach. The subject of this research was English lecturers and EFL students of English Language Education STKIP PGRI Jombang. The data were collected using observation, observation checklist, and recorded video. The result of this research revealed that 13 out of 15 types of positive politeness strategies were applied in EFL classroom interaction based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory. This research also finds the type of interlocutor responses based on Holmes's (1988) theory: accept, reject, and ignore. This research also reveals that the interlocutor mostly uses the accepted type of response when they receive positive politeness expressions.

Keyword: sociolinguistic, positive politeness strategy, compliment response

Abstrak

Strategi kesantunan merupakan hal yang penting bagi manusia karena dapat membuat interaksi menjadi harmonis. Penelitian ini berkaitan dengan penggunaan strategi kesantunan positif dalam interaksi kelas EFL. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah: (1) mengidentifikasi jenis strategi kesantunan positif yang digunakan dalam interaksi kelas EFL, (2) mengidentifikasi jenis tanggapan lawan bicara dalam menerima strategi kesantunan positif saat interaksi kelas EFL, dan (3) untuk menjelaskan tanggapan lawan bicara ketika menerima strategi kesantunan

positif saat interaksi kelas EFL. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Subyek penelitian ini adalah dosen Bahasa Inggris dan mahasiswa EFL Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP PGRI Jombang. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan observasi, checklist observasi, dan rekaman video. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan terdapat 13 dari 15 jenis strategi kesantunan positif diterapkan dalam interaksi kelas EFL berdasarkan teori Brown dan Levinson (1978). Penelitian ini juga menemukan jenis tanggapan lawan bicara berdasarkan teori Holmes (1988), yaitu menerima, menolak, dan mengabaikan. Penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan bahwa lawan bicara lebih banyak menggunakan tipe respon menerima ketika mereka menerima ungkapan kesantunan positif.

Kata kunci: *sosiolinguistik, strategi kesantunan positif, respon pujian*

Introduction

Communication is the most essential thing in every individual. Through communication, people can interact with others. Communication is the process of conveying common understanding and information from one person to another (Keyton, 2011). By communicating, people can interact with each other and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. In order to achieve a positive social relationship, both speakers and hearers should pay attention to pragmatic principles. One of those principles is politeness. Usually, people communicate politely to others to get respect or avoid unnecessary problems. Politeness is a form of conflict avoidance that can be done by speakers so that it allows communication with other parties who have the potential to be aggressive (Brown and Levinson 1987a). Being polite will make people become considerate conversational partners because it makes the hearer or interlocutors feel comfortable. Yule, as cited in Tantri (2020) states that politeness is being aware of people's faces that relate to social distance and closeness. Being polite means showing consideration for norms applied in society.

Brown and Levinson (1987) propose ways to retain the hearers' faces. Wiyanto & Armareza (2021) journal "Politeness Strategy Used by Teacher and Student Interaction on YouTube Channel" cited that Brown and Levinson divided politeness strategy into four types. The four types of the strategies are bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. People use various

politeness strategies to balance the competing goals of being both cooperative and face-saving in communication (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020). Using polite language makes people able to control the emotions and makes the hearers give an excellent response to the speaker's question or request. It also makes the hearer shows respect to the speaker. Based on the statement above, politeness is essential to apply in the classroom.

Politeness strategies in the classroom play a crucial role in creating a positive and respectful learning environment. Politeness strategies can be used by teachers to show appreciation for students' efforts and accomplishments, acknowledge their positive qualities, and create a friendly and supportive learning environment. But sometimes, both teacher and students used impolite language during learning process. The impoliteness language will cause social conflict, disharmony, and misunderstanding between teacher and students. To avoid those bad effect, teachers and students can use polite language by being respectful to others, actively listening, avoiding interrupting, using positive reinforcement, being inclusive, and handling conflict effectively (Heriyawati, 2019). Those ways can help to foster a culture of respect and inclusivity, where everyone feels valued and heard. By using politeness strategies, teachers and students can work together to create a positive and productive learning environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and contributing to the classroom community (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Politeness plays a significant role in this interaction, as it helps to build rapport and mutual respect between the teacher and students. Besides, Agustina & Cahyono (2016) state that the success of teaching-learning processes in the classroom is affected by the teacher-student relationship where both teachers and students are participating actively in developing intact communication.

In relation to politeness, Brown & Levinson (1987) mention that politeness strategy is a phenomenon that happens in daily life, and in this case, the researcher are interested to investigate the phenomenon of positive politeness strategy which is uttered by the lecturer and students in classroom interaction and also the respond of the interlocutor. The goal of positive politeness is to address the positive face needs of the interlocutor, thus enhancing the interlocutor's positive face. Positive politeness refers to a type of politeness that is oriented towards enhancing the positive face of the person being addressed. In other words, it is a type of politeness that aims to make people feel good about

themselves and maintain their positive self-image. Locher (2004) also notes that positive politeness is particularly effective in creating a sense of solidarity and building social relationships.

The researcher chooses freshmen EFL class as a subject to analyse the use of positive politeness. The reasons of choosing freshmen are because they are new to the college environment and may be more sensitive to the social dynamics in the classroom, making it easier to observe and analyse politeness strategies because they are still not contaminated with the campus world. The researcher takes several previous studies that analyse the use of politeness strategies. In a classroom context, research by Muna (2022), aims to find out the politeness strategies used by the teacher. The findings prove that there are 4 strategies formulated by Brown and Levinson, namely positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off record applied by the teacher during the learning process. Fiani & Setiani (2023) research seeks to find out about politeness strategies used by students in communication with their friends. The finding of this research shows that four strategies are applied by the students, with a positive politeness strategy as the most dominant type. The next research by Amanda (2021), focused in analysing the politeness strategies used by EFL students in WhatsApp groups. The results also revealed that the students used four politeness strategy types. Another politeness strategy used in the teaching process in English class by Rejeki & Azizah (2019). The results of this research indicate that students use three politeness strategies when having a conversation with native English speakers.

Most research in terms of politeness strategies is conducted in various objects like movies, novels, talk shows, YouTube videos, and classroom interactions. While previous studies have analysed the politeness strategies in various objects including in the classroom context, the findings of those previous studies mostly show that positive politeness strategies are the most strategies employed. Therefore, the researcher wants to investigate the positive politeness used in classroom interactions for a deeper understanding. This current research focuses on filling the gap by conducting research focused on positive politeness strategies and analysing how the interlocutor responds when they receive positive politeness strategies from the speaker. This research will bring new contributions in the form of depth understanding of the positive politeness strategies in classroom interaction. This research seeks to explain effective communication

using the politeness strategy in classroom interaction by investigating the positive politeness strategies and the interlocutor's response. The researcher used Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory in investigating positive politeness and Holmes's (1988) theory for the types of response in receiving positive politeness strategy.

Research Methods

In this research, the researcher employed qualitative approach which classified to the observational case study. Creswell (1994), stating that qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups considering social or human problems. Especially, this research is a case study as part of qualitative research. Case studies are an investigation strategy in which the researcher explores deeply a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014:20). Case study is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 2014).

The data source in this research was the EFL class in STKIP PGRI Jombang. The data uses in this research were positive politeness strategies uttered by lecturers and students, which were considered to contain positive politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and the interlocutor's response presented by Holmes (1988).

The instrument in this research was observation. The observation was conducted to determine the actual or factual situation of the teaching and learning process. Through an observation, the researcher learns about behavior and the meaning attached to those behaviors (Marshall and Rossman 2011). To collect data, the researcher used an observation checklist and a smartphone to record the learning process. The recording was used as the primary data, and an observation checklist was used to support the data from the recording. This research used Miles and Huberman (2014) theory to analyzed the data. To validate the data, this research used an external validator to validated the data obtained.

Results and Discussion

In this research, the classroom observation was conducted to identify the types of positive politeness strategies used by the lecturer and students in EFL classroom interaction, types of the interlocutor responses, and how the

interlocutor response when they receive positive politeness strategies from the speaker. Classroom observation was conducted twice in the second semester of English Language Education Department students at STKIP PGRI Jombang. There were speaking class that conducted on 14th June 2023 and a writing class on 15th June 2023. the researcher recorded the teaching and learning process from the beginning until the end of the class. The researcher also used an observation checklist to identify the positive politeness strategies and types of response that are dominantly used in classroom interaction.

1. Positive politeness strategies used by the lecturer and students in EFL classroom interactions.

From the transcript of the data, the researcher found some positive politeness strategies used by lecturer and students from the first and second observation. The detail as below:

- a) Strategy 1 - Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)

Extract 1

Lecturer : Morning, everyone. ***You look good today...***

At the beginning of the class, the lecturer entered the class and greeted all the students by saying, "*Morning, everyone. You look good today...*". The greetings utterance used by the lecturer showed that the lecturer employed positive politeness, and can be categorized as strategy noticing the hearers. The lecturer paid attention and noticed that the students looked fresh and ready for class. The lecturer used this strategy to show that she understood what shat the student's needs. Thus, the lecturer applied positive politeness strategy 1 to make the hearer or the interlocutor feel comfortable. With comfortable class, the learning process will run well.

- b) Strategy 2 - Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)

Extract 2

Student : It's not a link, but more to relationship

Lecturer : ***Wow, that's very good!***

The above extract presents how the lecturer applied positive politeness strategies in classroom interaction. The lecturer used an exaggerated expression, "*Wow, that's very good!*". The lecturer's utterance is the main mark of exaggerating sentence that belong in the positive politeness

strategy 2. The lecturer applied this strategy to express her compliment on the student's relationship with others that could provide him with an excellent job.

c) Strategy 4 - Use in-group identity markers

Extract 3

Lecturer : Morning, everyone. You look good today.

Student : Morning **Mam...**

The utterance in extract 3, showed that students employed positive politeness which was use in-group identity markers. The students used the identity marker "Mam" to call a female lecturer who was considered a respectable person. Calling "Mam" could be categorized as a positive politeness that students positioned themselves as children. This utterance indicated that students have a good emotional relationship with the lecturer.

d) Strategy 5 - Seek agreement

Extract 4

Student : **I'm a good cameraman**

Lecturer : Oh, **a good cameraman**

The utterance in extract 4, showed that the lecturer employed positive politeness that belong to seek agreement. Seek agreement may also be stressed by repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said. In this conversation, the lecturer agrees with what the student said by repeating what she said. The context is the student said that she was a good cameraman because she had been helping her friends to record interview videos. The student claims common ground with the lecturer to seek ways in which the lecturer can agree with her. Then the lecturer answered "Oh, a good cameraman", to assert that she agreed with what the student said.

e) Strategy 6 - Avoid disagreement

Extract 5

Lecturer : You are an introvert. That's really contradiction introvert and easy going.

Student : **Oh... I can be introvert and extrovert**

The utterance above shows the student applied positive politeness strategies which was avoid disagreement in classroom interaction. The

student pointed out her disagreement with the lecturer's statement that her personality was a contradiction. The student didn't use the word that made her utterance sounds like disagreement. The student uttered her mind by choosing vague words so that it would not be seen as disagreement.

f) Strategy 8 – Jokes

Extract 6

Student : ***Yes, I love children. Not in a weird way.***

Lecturer : Oh yeah, I know

The utterance “*Yes, I love children. Not in a weird way.*” shows that the student made a joke. When the lecturer asked about being a teacher, the student said he wanted to teach kids because he loves children. The student responds by joking about not loving children in a weird way. This utterance is categorized as a joke strategy. The student used a joke strategy to ease the atmosphere. Thus, the interview could run well and comfortably.

g) Strategy 9 - Assert or Presuppose S's knowledge of and concerns for H's wants

Extract 7

Student : Nggak, saya biasanya lihatnya itu Marvel!

Lecturer : Marvel Hero. ***Cuma Marvel Hero itu bahasa Inggrisnya terlalu complicated. Coba lihat movie yang paling gampang untuk dilihat dan didengarkan untuk yang sekelas mbak Shafa itu movie movie yang kartun, tapi jangan The Simpsons.***

The utterance above showed that the student stated that she watched Marvel to help her learn English, and the lecturer explained that Marvel movies had complicated English and it was a bit hard to learn through that movie. Thus, the lecturer provided a comprehensive overview of her understanding and knowledge of the student's wishes. Using this strategy, speakers built positive politeness through understanding between themselves and the hearer. Thus, communication and interaction between the two are believed to run well and be cooperative.

h) Strategy 10 - Offer or promises

Extract 8

Lecturer : Okay, so everyone. Uh... The odd number... ***Should I start from one up to the end or the end to one?*** End to one seems good.

In the extract above, the lecturer said, "*Should I start from one up to the end or the end to one?*". This kind of offer belongs to the positive politeness strategy 10. The lecturer did this with good intentions to satisfy the student's positive face wants. With this strategy, the student had the opportunity to choose about rolling name from one up to the end or the end to one to do the interview. Thus, the students' face is saved.

i) Strategy 11 - Be optimistic

Extract 9

Lecturer : Oh good. ***Maybe someday you can build your own organisasi like Lazis. And it's going to be better if you can do it.***

In the utterance above, the lecturer used an optimistic strategy to convince the student to meet the existing expectations. The optimistic strategy is reflected in the phrase, "*Maybe someday you can build your own organisasi like Lazis. And it's going to be better if you can do it.*" By using the optimistic strategy, the lecturer built positive politeness by not disappointing the hearer. The lecturer appreciated the student's expectations and answered her wish with optimism. Optimistic strategy is a speaker's effort to convince the hearer that he can meet the hearer's expectations. In this strategy, speakers give optimistic expressions to eliminate doubts about themselves in the hearer.

j) Strategy 12 - Include both S and H in the activity

Extract 10

Lecturer : ***Let's start the meeting!*** I hope that you are ready for today.

In the extract above, the lecturer's utterances, "*let's start the meeting! I hope that you are ready for today.*" express speaker and hearer's cooperation as indicated by the word "*let's*". The lecturer applied this strategy to show a common goal and to create rapport between the teacher and the student. Involving hearers or the other person to speak with our pronouncers who declare a togetherness that will reduce the threat to the opponent's face.

- k) Strategy 15 - Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).

Extract 11

Lecturer : *Oh, I'm sorry about it. But is he or she okay right now?*

The utterance above shows that the lecturer decides to save the student's positive face by giving a gift to the student. Here, the gift refers to sympathy for the student, by saying "Oh, I'm sorry about it. But is he or she okay right now?". Therefore, the lecturer can make the situation to continue the interview at ease. This strategy is used to increase solidarity and human relations among the speaker and hearer.

To know the occurrences and frequency of positive politeness strategies served by the lecturer and students in EFL classroom interaction, the researcher used an observation checklist to identify the types of positive politeness strategies served in EFL classroom interaction. The results of the observation checklist are performed in the following table:

Table 1.

Positive Politeness Served by Lecturer and Students in EFL Classroom Interaction

Strategy	Positive Politeness Type	Occurrences	
		1 st Observation	2 nd Observation
1	Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)	6	4
2	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)	7	1
3	Intensify interest to H	-	-
4	Use in-group identity markers	7	17
5	Seek agreement	6	8
6	Avoid disagreement	2	1
7	Presuppose/ raise/ assert common ground	-	1
8	Jokes	8	5
9	Assert or Presuppose S's knowledge of and concerns for H's wants	4	-
10	Offer or promises	6	6
11	Be optimistic	1	-
12	Include both S and H in the activity	7	5
13	Give (or ask for) reasons	-	1
14	Assume or assert reciprocity	-	-
15	Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)	2	1
Total		56	50

2. Types of interlocutors' responses in receiving positive politeness strategies in EFL classroom interaction.

From the transcript of the data, the researcher found all the response's types in receiving the positive politeness strategies used by lecturer and students in the first observation. The detail as below:

a) Accept

Extract 23

Student : Let's do video.

Lecturer : **Okay good!**

The conversation happened in the EFL classroom. The participants were students and the lecturer. The lecturer was going to do an individual interview with each student. Here, the lecturer offered the students to record the interview with video or voice recording. The students employed positive politeness, including S and H, and the lecturer was the one who received positive politeness expressions from students. The lecturer responds the positive politeness by saying, "*okay, good!*". The response used by the lecturer is categorized as agreeing utterances.

b) Reject

Extract 24

Lecturer : Let's start the meeting! I hope that you are ready for today.

Student : **No!!!!**

The conversation happened in the classroom. The participants were the students and the lecturer. The lecturer asked students to do an individual interview at the beginning of the class. The lecturer employed a positive politeness strategy, including S and H in her utterance. The students were the ones who received positive politeness expressions from the lecturer. The student responds the positive politeness by saying, "*No!!!!*". The response used by the students is categorized as disagreeing utterances.

c) Ignore

Extract 25

Lecturer : Morning, everyone. You look good today.

Student : **Morning Mam.**

The conversation happened in the classroom. The participants were the students and the lecturer. The lecturer greeted the students at the beginning of class. The lecturer used positive politeness and noticed that

the students seemed in good shape. As the interlocutor, the students only answer the lecturer's greeting but ignore the lecturer's positive politeness. The category that the students used was ignoring positive politeness by not giving any response.

To know the occurrences and frequency of the interlocutor response used in EFL classroom interaction, the researcher used an observation checklist to identify the types of interlocutor responses served in EFL classroom interaction. The results of the observation checklist are performed in the following table:

Table 2.
Types of Interlocutor's Responses in Receiving Positive Politeness Strategy

No	Type of Responses	Occurrences	
		1 st Observation	2 nd Observation
1	Accept	36	24
2	Reject	6	11
3	Ignore	14	15
Total		56	50

3. How the interlocutors' response when receiving positive politeness strategies in EFL classroom interaction.

Table 3.
Positive Politeness Strategy and How the Interlocutor's Response

No.	Positive Politeness Strategy	Interlocutor Responses		
		Accept	Reject	Ignore
1	Strategy 1 - Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) (10 utterances)	7	-	3
2	Strategy 2 Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H) (8 utterances)	5	-	3
3	Strategy 3 - Intensify interest to H	-	-	-
4	Strategy 4 - Use in-group identity markers (24 utterances)	13	3	8
5	Strategy 5 - Seek agreement (14 utterances)	10	1	3
6	Strategy 6 - Avoid disagreement (3 utterance)	2	-	1

7	Strategy 7 - Presuppose/ raise/ assert common ground (1 utterance)	-	1	-
8	Strategy 8 – Jokes (13 utterances)	8	3	2
9	Strategy 9 - Assert or Presuppose S's knowledge of and concerns for H's wants (4 utterance)	2	-	2
10	Strategy 10 - Offer or promises (12 utterances)	5	7	-
11	Strategy 11 - Be optimistic (1 utterance)	-	-	1
12	Strategy 12 - Include both S and H in the activity (12 utterances)	6	2	4
13	Strategy 13 Give (or ask for) reasons (1 utterance)	-	-	1
14	Strategy 14 - Assume or assert reciprocity	-	-	-
15	Strategy 15 - Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation) (3 utterances)	3	-	-
Total		61	17	28
		106		

From the total number of 106 utterances served by the lecturer and students in EFL classroom interaction, this research found thirteen types of positive politeness based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory. Among them are: 10 notice attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods); 8 exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H); 24 use in-group identity markers; 14 seek agreement; 3 avoid disagreement; 1 presuppose/ raise/ assert common ground; 13 jokes; 4 assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concerns for H's wants; 12 offer or promises; 1 be optimistic, 12 include both S and H in the activity; 1 give (or ask for) reasons; and 3 give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation). From the same total of response, this research also shows all the type of interlocutor response when receiving positive politeness expression based on Holmes's (1988) theory. Among them are: 61 accept, 17 reject, and 28 ignore.

In classroom interaction, using in-group identity markers is the strategy that primarily occurred. This strategy mainly accepts by the interlocutor when they received it. Despite being the strategy that is mostly accepted by the interlocutor, use in-group identity markers is also the main strategy ignored. While the strategy

of presupposing/raise/assert common ground, being optimistic, and giving (or ask for) reasons are the less occurred in EFL classroom interaction. These strategies only happened once, and the interlocutor almost rejected it as a response.

Conclusion

After analyzing and discussing the positive politeness strategies used in EFL classroom interaction, the findings show that almost all the positive politeness strategies can be found in the lecturer and students' utterances, except the strategy of intensifying interest to the hearer and the strategy of assuming or asserting reciprocity. The researcher found 106 data in the EFL classroom interaction containing positive politeness strategies. In this research, the strategy of using in-group identity markers occurred 24 times, and it is noted as the highest rank. Meanwhile, the strategies of presupposing/rise/assert common ground and being optimistic are in the lowest position. Both strategies only occurred once in the EFL classroom interactions.

Based on the analysis of the types of interlocutors' responses in receiving positive politeness strategies in EFL classroom interaction. It can show that the kinds of responses appear in this research; accept, reject, and ignore. Based on the finding, the accept type is the most used by the interlocutor in receiving the positive politeness strategy from the speaker and occurred 61 times. While the reject type is in the lowest rank and occurred only 17 times.

Related to how the interlocutor responds towards positive politeness, this research found that the interlocutor mainly accepts the positive politeness use in-group identity markers uttered by the speaker. It arises because Indonesians tend to avoid making unnecessary problems such as misunderstanding or debating with others. By accepting, the interlocutor can ease the situation in the class. Thus, an effective and positive learning process can be obtained.

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