AN ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY EFL STUDENTS IN MAKING REQUEST

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Abstract

This study investigates politeness strategies used by EFL students in teaching and learning process. It focuses on the types of politeness strategies namely positive and negative politeness strategy that occurs in making request. This study used descriptive qualitative method in which describe the phenomenon when the students had speaking course in the classroom. The subject of this study were the second semester of English Education Department students who followed the speaking class. This research used purposive sampling in choosing the sample. There were 12 samples chosen randomly from the population. Five of them were male and seven of them were female. The data were collected by some instruments, namely: observation sheet, video recorder and field note. After collecting the data, the researcher transcript and analyze the data by using politeness theory. The result of this study showed that, there were 12 positive politeness and 14 negative politeness strategies used by EFL students in teaching and learning process especially in making request. There were 3 types of positive politeness strategies used by EFL students, namely: be optimistic, presuppose/raise/assert common ground, offer and promise. Meanwhile, there were also 3 types of negative politeness strategies occurs, namely: Impersonalized S and H, Be conventionally indirect, and Question, hedge. From the finding, negative politeness strategy that mostly used by EFL students in teaching and learning process especially in making request.

Keywords: *Positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, EFL students, teaching and learning process*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication system which used by the people in a particular country. It has an important role in human's life, because language is a mean of communication and it is used as a media in interaction to the other people in one society. As a mean of communication, language is a kind of symbols used to express our thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Through language, people interact and cooperate one to the other. Moreover, Holmes (2000) states that language is the greatest machine-tool which makes human culture possible. In this case, one of the human cultures is communication.

Communication could occurs when there is speaker and hearer who are talking about certain topics. In the other words, communication is the process of making both participants have an equal about the topic that they were discussed. A good communication will really influence the success interacting among the member of society. It is very important for human being to communicate, to interact and to cooperate in various situations.

In having communication, politeness takes an important role. According to Leech (1983) politeness relates the way of speaker makes communicative interaction in order to avoid insulting to the other or listener. In line with that, politeness also necessary used in teaching English as a foreign language classroom interaction especially in making request. The study of requests has close relation with the study of speech acts.

Furthermore, Austin (1962) defines speech acts as acts performed by utterances such as giving order, making promises, complaining, requesting, among others. When the speakers utter a sentence or a phrase, they are performing an act to which they expect their listeners to react with verbal or nonverbal behavior. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, requests are Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), since a speaker is imposing his/her will on the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) propose that when confronted with the need to perform a FTA, the individual must choose between performing the FTA in the most direct and efficient manner or attempting to mitigate the effect of the FTA on the hearer's face.

Actually is not easy to manage the students in EFL classroom. Most of them have different ability and way to request something to the others. Their requests could be an object, an action, some kinds of services, or it could be a request for information. Sometimes, the requester also runs the risk of losing face him/herself, as the request may choose to refuse and comply his/her wishes (Krisnoni, 2013). Here, the teacher is expected to save the students' face and create a good atmosphere in order to make the students comfortable in the classroom interaction.

Viewing on the problem above, it makes politeness is very crucial in request and the writer needs to investigate the politeness strategy used by the students in the EFL classroom interaction especially in making request.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researchers used the descriptive qualitative method. The researchers tried to describe the phenomenon when the students had speaking course in the classroom. Descriptive research is a research that asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of variables. The design of this research was qualitative because the researchers wanted to get in details about politeness strategies produced by the EFL students when they had communicated with the other students by using English in the speaking class. The data in this research were obtained from the students' conversation in the classroom.

The population of this research was the second semester of English Education Department students who followed the speaking class. This research used purposive sampling in choosing the sample. There were 12 samples chosen randomly from the population. Five of them were male and seven of them were female. From those samples, four videos were produced and then analyzed to get the data.

The primary data in this research are from the video conversations done by the students. The researchers observed and transcribed the videos, gave code, classified, analyzed, and discussed it. The researchers transcribed the video to written forms and gave the code for every produced data to classify the

data. After that, the data are analyzed and discussed. The data in this research were in the forms of sentences, clauses, and words. The next steps required the researchers to code and classify the data based on politeness strategies categorized by Brown and Levinson (1987).

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As stated in the previous chapter, the purpose of the study is to find out the kinds of politeness strategy used by the students in English foreign language teaching and learning especially in making request. The writer took the data by using video recorder which was used to record learning activities in the classroom in speaking class. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there were 25 politeness strategy and those strategies divided into 15 strategies of positive politeness and 10 negative politeness strategies.

The finding of this study showed that there were 26 requests occurs in teaching and learning process. There were 12 requests implying positive politeness strategies, and 14 requests belongs to negative politeness strategy.

Below is the table of positive politeness strategies used in the classroom discussion.

No.	Strategies	Frequency
1.	Be optimistic	4
2.	Pressupose/raise/assert common ground	6
3.	Offer and promise	2
	Total	12

Table. 1 The frequency of Positive Politeness Strategy

Positive politeness is used to exprees the intimacy or friendliness between the speaker and the hearer. In this case, only some of the students use this kinds of politeness strstegy in the learning process. The students they tend to use positive politeness strategy based on some reason, such as: they want to relax in the learning process. Therefore, they will feel comfortable to follow the lesson. Beside that, most of the students tend to use this strategy to their classmates not with their lecturer in order to make them enjoy the learning activity. In contrary, there are also some students use this kind of strategy to their teacher. It is because some of them feel that learning should create good atmosphere in the classroom environment. They could asks whatever they want to asks about their difficulties in learning. Therefore, they use this strategy to avoid uncomfortable situation.

Meanwhile, there are 18 requests imply negative politeness strategy. The table below will give complete display of this strategy.

No.	Strategies	Frequency
1.	Impersonalized Speaker and Hearer	7
2.	Be conventionally indirect	3
3.	Question, hedge	4
	Total	14

Table. 2 The frequency of Negative Politeness Strategy

The data shows that there are some negative politeness strategy used by the students in their communication. They are impersonalized Speaker and Hearer, minimize the imposition, and be conventionally indirect.

From the findings, the students use two kinds of politeness strategy in their communication in EFL classroom. The data from each strategy could be seen as follows:

1. Positive Politeness Strategy

In this strategy, the students use 3 types of positive politeness strategy, namely be optimistic, pressupose/raise/assert common ground and offer and promise. They use it in the EFL classroom, especially in making request with their lecturer and classmates. There are some positive politeness strategy with its conversations that happened in EFL classroom especially in making request:

a. Be optimistic.

This strategy is giving pressure to the hearer so that the hearer will accept the speaker request. This conversation occurs between the students.

Student 1: After this class, could you accompany me to the

library? I will borrow some books for our task, ok.

Student 2: Ok.. please remind me later.

Looking at the request above, the word 'ok' is an optimistic expression in term of addresse. By uttering the word 'ok', the student 1 give pressure to the students 2 to accept his invitation.

b. Pressupose/Raise/Assert Common Ground

This politeness strategy is similar with "be optimistic" strategy, in which it appears in the conversation during making request. This conversation occurs between the students.

Student 1: Do you know? There are some students do not collect the

assignment today.

Student 2: Who are they? What happen to them?

Student 1: I do not know. I did not get the any information.

Student 2: Where is the attendance list? Give it to me! I have to check it now.

Based on the conversation above, the student 2 is asking request to the students by uttering *"where is the attendance list?"*. In this case, the student 1 has small talk first with addresse. After the student 2 know there were some students absence, she changes the small talk into a request. It makes, this request belongs to pressupose/raise/assert common ground.

c. Offer and promise

This strategy emphasizes that the speaker and hearer are cooperators. Offering and promising are the outcome of this strategy. Both of them are perform good intension from the speaker to satisfy hearer's positive face wants.

Student 1: I will go to canteen. Do you want some snacks?

Student 2: No. Thank you. I already bring some cookies.

Request for offer delivered by student 1 was a request of offering something to be accepted or refused. His action was for the benefit of student 2 and as an appreciation for her. Here, the student 1 had satisfied student 2 positive face wants by offering her some tea. In the other words, the speaker may choose to stress his cooperation with the hearer in order to redress the potential threat of some FTAs. Offers and promises demonstrate the speaker's good intentions in satisfying hearer's positive face wants.

2. Negative Politeness Strategy.

Beside the positive politeness, negative politeness strategy in making request also occurs in the EFL classroom. In this strategy, the writer found 2 types of politeness strategy happens in the students' conversation. Those types are impersonalized speaker and hearer and be conventionally indirect. The conversation occurs between the students with their teacher and also their classmate. The data could be seen as follows:

a. Impersonalized speaker and hearer

The aim of this strategy is the speaker does not want to impinge the hearer by not interesting subject in making request. It is because the speaker doesn not insert subject, this strategy sounds impolite to the hearer.

Student : Give me to answer this question, Mrs.

Lecturer : Oke, please.

The conversation show that the request pattern sounds impolite and direspectful in the classroom. The request tend to be more like command. This students use this kind of strategy because he feels that the answer is right so that he has a good confident in making request to his lecturer.

b. Be conventionally indirect

In this strategy, the speaker is being indirect that points out that the utterance is different from its literal meaning. The following example occurs during the learning process between the students and the teacher in the classroom.

Student : Excuse me, Mrs... I got a stomachache, and it's so

serious. May I have permission?

Teacher : Ok. You may. You have to take a rest.

The conversation shows that the request that is stated by the students sounds polite. It indicates by the utterance *"excuse me"*. He is making request in order to have a permission from his teacher because of his stomacache.

c. Question, hedge

A hedge is a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set. A hedge makes a membership of a noun phrase in a set that it is partial, or true only in certain respects and more complete than might be expected. Hedge may be functioned to

soften command and turn it into a polite request.

Student 1: Will you come to Ari's house tomorrow to make our assignment?

Student 2: Ah. Perhaps. What time you will go there?

Student 1: About 10 o'clock.

Student 2: Ok see you tomorrow.

Student 1 asked student 2 whether she would come to Ari's home or not by saying *"will you come to Ari's house tomorrow to make our assignment?"* Her utterance can be indicated as a request to the student 2 to come to Ari's home.

Based on the data above, this study mostly negative politeness strategy. It could be seen from the data in the table that there are 12 positive politeness occur during the learning process with 4 utterances use be optimistic strategy, 6 utterances use the pressupose/raise/assert common ground strategy and 2 utterances belongs to offer and promise. Meanwhile, there are 14 negative politeness happen in this study. It is 7 utterances belongs to impersonalized S and H strategy, 3 utterances use be conventionally indirect and 4 utterances use question and hedge strategy in EFL learning.

IV. CONCLUSION

This sudy investigate the types of politenes strategy used by the EFL students especially in making request. Looking at the finding and discussion, positive and negative politeness strategy used in this study. The data shows that there are some strategies of politeness occurs in the classroom situation. They are be optimistic, pressupose/raise/assert common ground, offer and promise for positive politeness strategy, meanwhile impersonalized S and H, be conventionally indirect, and question, hedge appear for negative politeness strategy. Those strategy happens in the EFL classroom during teaching and learning process. Besides that, this study also insert the speech acts and its types in which request is a part of speech acts.

Moreover, this study contributes to the body of research on interlanguage pragmatics by revealing that EFL learners' use of politeness strategies is not always similar to the native speakers. Compared to the native speakers, the learners tended to impolite strategies. In addition to L2 proficiency, cultural differences between L1 and L2 have been found to play an important role in the use of politeness strategies.

V. SUGGESTION

After discussing the research result and conclusion, the writer derived several suggestions:

1. Based on the result of study, it is suggested that the students should used the politeness strategy in their daily conversation. It will make them understand and know how to be polite in doing communication, especially in making request. It also helps the students in choosing of words when they communicate to the others.

2. For the reader who learn English, it is suggested that the use of politeness strategy is useful in the daily life and make them to be more polite in communication. The ability in choosing and applying the politeness strategies, helps the readers in

understanding pragmatics field, especially politeness strategy in requesting.

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