STRATEGIES OF POLITENESS USED BY ENGLISH LECTURERS WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE STUDENTS IN LEARNING PROCESS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN WEST SUMATERA

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Abstract

This research studied types of strategies of politeness, which were used by the lecturers when they interacted with their students in learning process. Qualitative method with the techniques of recording was used to gather the data. Informants were the lecturers of English department who taught at odd semester 2013/2014 academic year. Sampling technique was purposive sampling. Instruments of the research were video and questionnaire. Data were analyzed through the some procedures, as providing the data and organizing them, exploring them by coding, using the code to gain a general description and deciding theme, presenting the findings, interpreting, and validating. Findings can be interpreted that the types of politeness used by the lecturers are categorized into two general kinds, positive and negative strategies. The positive strategies include making the students comforted, being consistent, being responsible, being industrious, being appreciative, and being aware. However, the negative strategies include being angry, being inconsistent, being irresponsible, being unaware, and being inappreciative. All kinds of positive strategies are suggested to be used when interacting with the students in learning process. Conversely, the negative strategies are suggested not to be used, with the exception, when the students break norms.

Key words: strategies, politeness, interacting, learning, university

A.   INTRODUCTION

Every lecturer must know that politeness while interacting to the students is very important. It will be useful for student-teacher relationship and student-student relationship. In addition, it may affect on the students' characters. Since the lecturer is a public figure, especially for the students, the way she or he behaves in the classroom may become a model for them, eventhough they have been adults. Therefore, the lecturers must be serious to approach the students politely so that they can have good relationship.

The lecturer and the students' relationship can be created through interaction that can be done outside or inside the class. Interaction is achieved through language and non-verbal means of expression. In addition, because the classroom social situation has a primary pedagogic purpose, the interaction must be done to gain the purpose, for example in talking, lecturing, asking questions, giving instructions, and so on. The teacher does not only use language for these functions, but he or she demonstrates and uses mimes a lot. Furthermore, if the students trust the lecturer, they may understand what the lecturer informs and persuades easily so that the process of education can run well (see Dagarin, 2014: 129).

Having done a slight observation, the writer found two opposite situations in the classroom. The first situation was that some lecturers could keep talking politely to the students, but sometimes they spoke rudely to the students. One of the phenomena got in the writer's preliminary research was that lecturers used impolite utterance to their student when asking a question by saying, 'It's a silly question." As the effect, the student who asked the question felt a shame and he did not want to ask any questions in the following meeting. Some students did not respect their lecturers. It was proved when they interacted with their lecturer in the situation they got a bad mark, for example, by sending an impolite message as '*Bapak ndak berprikemanusiaan, sampai hati maagiah wak nilai E'*. Conversely, before he knew his mark, his relationship with the lecturer was fine, but soon after knowing his mark, it changed as described before. The fact above shows that the students make relationship to the teacher for having good mark.

In communicating with the students while learning process, the lecturers may apply different politeness strategies. It may be because of their cultural background, which was formed since they were children by their family, society, and their teachers since they were in kindergarten. However, whatever the strategies the lecturers use are those that can create useful classroom situation. If the students feel displeased with the situation for the sake of communication, they may not understand learning material so that the learning purpose cannot be gained.

From the above phenomena, the writer identifed two research problems regarding to the strategy of politeness and the lecturers' perception about politeness. In this paper, she   focused on the strategy of politeness. She studied types of strategy of politeness the lecturers used when they interacted with the students in the classroom.

B.   STRATEGY OF POLITENESS IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION
1.   Interaction and Classroom Interaction

Interaction happens when two or more persons are engaged each other. Everyone in interaction will send and receive the information from one to the other; a speaker will send the information and vice versa. Furthermore, in interaction, there is social communication which involves some participants and has background and purpose to get a balance (Watt, 2003:20).

According to A.M Sardirman, classroom interaction (2008:8) is the relation between teacher and the students when they share information one and another to gain the purpose of learning. Moreover, it is planned by the teacher on purpose to educate the students. In addition, he states some characteristics of interaction, which contains purpose, a message, active students, a lecturer, some methods to gain the purpose of education, the situation facilitating the learning process, and evaluation. All are needed in classroom interaction, but if one of them is absent, the interaction cannot run well, for example, when a lecturer teaches the new material in a noisy place, the students will find it difficult to concentrate their mind so that they cannot be involved in communication.

To Vygotsky learning is the dynamic process between teacher or lecturer and the students in making the dialog for the improvement of the students' knowledge and competence. Well adds that the teacher or lecturer actively plays his or her roles in any activities that significantly challenge the students, observe what they do dependently, help, and guide them (see Richard– Amato, 2003:52).

On the other hand, Freire (1970) classifies education based on the ways the teacher communicates in the classroom. The first type is called banking education, which involves the activities of keeping money. The students are considered as an empty deposit, who will receive, recall, and review what the lecturer says. While a educator functions as a consumer who will deposit their money. Thus, there is no real communication between the educator and the students because the method is lecturing.

The second type of education is liberal education by which the lecturer and the students become partners in the learning process. The students cognitively act with their background knowledge, so they must have preparation before coming to class and the educator functions as facilitator. The process of learning is characterized by problem solving; the students work cooperatively to understand a topic based on their experience which is supported by information from different sources in the classroom. This type is expected to apply more at university level. However, sometimes the lecturer's role and the students' are not balanced, for example, the students work themselves without a valuable support from the lecturer, especially if the lecturer has got insufficient experience or if he or she does not acquire the topic.

Furthermore, different type of education may contribute to the type of politeness the lecturer uses in interaction. The lecturer, who acquires the material, can play his or her role better in interacting with the students, so if the students misinterpret the material, the lecturer will treat them politely. On the other hand, if he or she acquires the material less she or he seems less polite, because he or she lets the student learn without giving comment or helping them understand the material deeply.

Moreover, Richard-Amato reveals that the relationship between the teacher or the lecturer and the students can cause them to have meaningful interaction with the relevant content. If such relation does not occur, meaningful communication will not work. Therefore, the students will face some problems if the lecturer does not interact with them well or they do not interact with the learning content. Polite interaction is also relevant to the lecturer's desire to make the students understand the learning content (see Richard– Amato, 2003:52).

2.   Politeness

Te term of politeness generally means 'care' of others which can be found when one interacts with the other. It is various which are influenced by cultures. Watt (2003:14) has opinion that every culture agrees that politeness is characterized by the effort to share with others, to do social interaction, and to be aware of them. Moreover, he argues that an utterance is opened to be interpreted, meaning that every one may have different interpretation about the utterance.

The value which exists in a community can change from period to period, which can be influenced by some factors as everything which comes to the commuity and the responses given to them. The change of time and human's acceptance of values may change their understanding of what is meant by politeness. In Minangkabau, for example, years ago, people were very care of others so that they live in the community peacefully and help each other, including in building a house. However, when the value has changed and money has become priority, their soliderity has been getting lost. Such change is clearly seen in the way they communicate with the others, showing their egoisticism. Moreover, some people don't care whether an utterance is polite and the impolite words have become familiar with them.

To Watt (2003: 13), research field about politeness is still ambigues, whether the term"polite" or "politeness" is used. The problem is rased, but not solved. Some researchers use the term "emotive

communication" (Arndt and Janney 1985a) "tact" (Janney and Arndt 1992; Leech 1993) and politic behavior (Watt, 1989c, 1992). Fortunately, every term is related to the way of communication.

Most people did not care of politeness in communication. They sometimes do not realize that they have used impolite words when interacting with others. Moreover, they can not account the effect of their words to the others. Thus, impoliteness currently becomes familiar for people in a society.

Moreover, Culpeper (2012) categorizes some attitude considered polite. They include using polite utterance, showing a respect, being friendly, showing pleasant, having consideration, being cheerful, being calm, and gracious. On the other hand, being angry, using taboo, having negative judgment to the other are considered impolite. Such attitude may happen in every situation in interaction. Furthermore, in classroom situation, where the teacher or lecturer wants to educate, polite or impolite utterances sometimes are also used.

Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) argues some factors that characterize politeness or impoliteness. They are personal values, self concept, self identity in a group, role expectation, and norms. The indicators are decided based on linguistic factors to linguistic strategies, for example, a selection of diction, simple expression, voice quality, etc (see Brunet, etc, 2010). Positive style with positive meaning is considered the most polite. On the other hand, negative message with negative style is impolite. Furthermore, sarcasm may be considered polite depending on the content of the message. Polite sarcasm may mean polite, but impolite if it is uttered impolitely. In addition, he states that politeness in jorking as interpersonal politeness. However, nonlinguistic indicator is frequently used by smiling.

Regarding to the politeness, in pragmatics Lakoff (1979) lists three rules as, not forcing, giving a choise, and being close. He divides politeness into formal, informal, and friendship. He did a research about politeness viewed from gender and found that women were more polite than men viewed from the kind of language they used, the structure, and the language behaviour pattern (Watt, 2003: 63). Practically, Lo and Howard (2009) categorize people as demonstrating respect politeness, or as acting like particular social types (e.g. "well-behaved child") based upon their linguistic behavior. In addition, displaying respect and politeness towards others can be done through features of language like tone of voice or use of 'polite' words, phrases, and routines.

Finally, the writer can argue that the nature of politeness in interaction is related to human relation. If a person feels peaceful and pleasant when she or he talks to another person either during or after talking, the person can be considered polite. Politeness can be reflected by awareness and consideration of any action and language used during the interaction that can be seen through his or her face through smiling. Furthermore, the writer categorizes politeness strategy into two kinds, as positive politeness and negative politeness. The strategy of positive politess involves any utterances which can please others. On the other hand, negative strategy is considered impolite which includes the use of anger, uncommon words, negative perception to the others. In addition, face, the quality of voice, and the way of talkig can determine the degree of politeness. But, it is related to personality; some persons talk with high quality of voice and with impolite style when talking politely.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a qualitative type. The participants were English lecturers who taught in 2013/2014 academic year which were selected purposively. The number of participant was 7 lecturers which were decided based on the data that could be gathered. In gathering the data, the researcher used video to record the process of learning.

Having gathered the data, the researcher analyzed them by following the steps below (Cresswell, 2012:236-264). They involve organizing the data based on the types of politeness the lecturers used in classroom interaction, exploring and coding the data,then using the codes to describe the data, representing and reporting findings, interpreting findings, and validating the accuracy.

D. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Having analyzed the data by following the steps above, the writer found that there are two types of politeness used by the lecturers in classroom interaction. They are positive politeness and negative politeness. The data can be seen below.

1. Positive Politeness
a. *Making the students comforted*

The writer found some kinds of data, showing varieties of utterances which could make the students pleased and confort as follows.

1) when a sudent wrote an exercise on board and the result was inappropriate. The lecturer asked another student whether the answer was correct or not. After the second student revised the sentence, the lecturer asked the reason, followed by the following sentence to show what mistake has been made by the first

student. The lecturer read the correct answer and while looking at the student, the lecturer reminded the student not to do it later by saying, ''*sekali ini*, **no problem, but don't use it later**'' which was uttered while smiling. The utterance shows that the lecturer apologizes the student for his mistake and it is a kind of politeness. Furthermore, the way the lecturer commented the student can avoid the student's feeling of shyness as if the mistake was a common mistake. As the result, she or he will not be afraid of making mistake when answering the lecturer's question.

2) The lecturer helped the students who had responsibility on the topic by adding some more explanation without telling that they were wrong, so that they felt relieved. In addition, the students could understand more what they have read before. It was also useful for the other students so that they can understand the lesson. The lecturer's utterance started with, **''Well, look at the whiteboard...''**

3) Announcing the students' work if they have done well. After coming to the classroom, and before coming to the new material, the lecturer announced the students who did their homework well. The utterance was, **"Lita, Deva, dan Deni** (not the real name*), tugasnya bagus*.'' The utterance is a kind of reinforcement showing that the lecturer respects the students for their good job. As the result, they can maintain their good job for the future.

b. *Being responsible*

The following utterances show that the lecturers take responsibility on the students' learning development.

1) In the opening session of learning acivities, the lecturer asked one of the students randomly to write what had been done on board. When the student did it incorrectly, the lecturer did not embarras the student, rather reminded him with the material by sayig: **"*Boleh kita menggunakan kalimat* "I will to present?** Then the lecturer directly answered **"never"**, **"*Sesudah modal selalu diikuti oleh* "what"?** The question is directed to the whole class and answered by some students by saying**"verb"**. Before moving to the new topic the lecturer reminded he student not to make such mistake by adding some examples.

2) In the class where the students work in group and each group has responsibility for one topic, the way of treating the students can be seen below.
The questions of the other groups were noted by the lecturer and after the group anwered each question, the lecturer added explanation or corrected if there were some wrong answers. The data can be seen through a small talk below.

Lecturer: **"How can you make your students understand reading?**
Student: **ask them read article, learn vocabulary….?"**
Lecturer: **"Vocabulary tu bana yang masalah"** (the question is distributed to the other students and finally because the answer was not appropriate, then
Lecture: **"Preteaching penting, do you know prior knowledge**?'' P**rior knowledge ….**

c. *Being Consistent*

The following data describe the lecturer's consistency about the rules made by all students in the first meeting. They agreed either the lecturer or the students must come on time. They agreed the longest time they might be late was 10 minutes. If more, they were not permitted to enter the class.

A teacher came late to class, and directly said to the students **"I am very sorry for coming late**''. It was also founs that the lecturer said, *"Saya terlambat, sesuai dengan perjanjian, keterlambatan yang ditolerasi adalah sepuluh menit, jika lebih tidak boleh masuk kelas, berlaku untuk saya dan anda. Sekarang saya terlambat, jadi kita tidak jadi kuliah hari ini."*

On the other hand, when one of the students came late, the lecturer reminded him about the time by saying, **"what time is it?**'' so that the student realized his mistake and went out. Such kind of politeness can be called as a firm education. Though consistency is important to apply, but if the application is not done based on consideration of the students' problem, it can be considered cruel or impolite.

d. *Being industrious*

The effort of the lecturer to make the students understand the material can be seen through the language used.

lecturer: *"Bagaimana caranya lagi supaya you bisa paham dengan materi ini? Kata you sudah paham, tetapi bagaimana hasilnya? Saya sudah berusaha sekuat tenaga supaya you mampu, tetapi kenapa?"*
the student: *"Kami sudah paham waktu Mis menerangkan."*

Lecturer: "*Jadi apa salahnya?*"
student: "*Kami kurang latihan*"
lecturer: "*Kalau begitu you mau berjanji untuk mengerjakan latihan?*"

The dialog shows that the interaction happened heart to heart because both the lecturer and the students blamed themselves. Moreover, the students realized their weaknesses and promised to change their ways in learning.

e.   Being aware
When the students were asked to do exercises in the classroom, the lecturer walked around the class observing the students' works. One of the students asked the lecturer as the following dialog.
Student: "*Apa ini benar Mis?* "**She will reading a book** "
lecturer: **what is the subject?**
Student: **she Mis.**
lecturer: **read +ing, should be accompanied by?**
Student: silent
Lecturer: *masih ingat ndak dengan* **be and ing***, dua hal yang berpasangan?*
Kalau kita menggunakan **veb ing***, harus ada* **to be** *sebelumnya, kalau ada modal sebelum* **to be***, maka to be nya adalah* **be***. OK?*

Such error has been done repeatedly and must not be made anymore. However, there were some studentds still not understanding the material. In this situation the lecturer did not neglect the student, but guided her individually in her desk so that she could understand the lesson.   The situation is a kind of politeness can used by the lecturer to the slow students.

f.   Being appreciative
The situation was found when the students had answered a question given by the lecturer incorrectly as the following dialog.

Lecturer:"**Why does CLT appear?**"
Student: "**Because CLT o…, ooo***, karena bahasa yang digunakan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari sebagai pennyempurnaan metode-metode sebelumnya supaya lancar berkomunikasi, contohnya, ….*"
Lecture: "*Benar bahasa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari tu?*"
Another student: "*Pengajaran yang menekankan kepada komunikasi*
Lecturer: "*Hampir tepat, terus… "* **dan mahasiswa melanjutkan jawabannya, tetapi masih belum lengkap.**
Lecturer: explaining and illustrating

The above data shows that the lecturer appreciated the student' answers eventhough some were wrong. He lecturer appreciated the student by asking another question so that they can realize whether his answer was correct or wrong. The lecture was not angry, but added some more questions to make the students know their answer. Conversely, the students who have answered almost correctly, were reinforced by saying "*hampir benar, terus*…, eventhough the answers were not complete yet.

2.   Negative politeness
a.   Being angry
There are two kinds of data showing the lecturer's anger described below.
1)   This utterance was uttered when most of the students' works in the class were not done as expected.

Lecturer: "*Saya masih berprasangka baik saja… Amerika dengan New York mana yang city?*"
Student   "**New York**"
Lecturer: "*Jadi kenapa dibuat Amerika. Itu aneh bin ajaib.* **You** *tahu itu.   Sudah tahu, tapi masih banyak yang melaku*kannya."

The utterance was uttered with high intonation and facial expression of anger. Though it was categorized into negative politeness, such anger is a must used in educating the students for doing their tasks just for the sake of accomplishing them, but without trying to understand.

2) The following dialog happened when a lecture wanted to operate LCD but it could not run. One of the students said spontaneously. **"Mis, you should switch on LCD first Mis.** Then the lecturer directly responded to the studnt by saying: **"I know it,** *saya tidak gaptek*..."

The utterance made the students shy and felt unrespected so that he or he will not enjoy the class. It should be avoided because it is not useful for education. Moreover, the student will not acquire learning material.

b. *Being irresponsible*

1) The lecturer's irresponsibility can be seen through behavior and language used during the classroom interaction. One of the lecturer's activities in the classroom that should not be done is correcting the students' works while the students discussing a topic. As the effect, the lecturer did not follow what the students talk about and always kept silent so that there was no contribution could be given to the students.

2) The utterance showing that the lecturer was irresponsible for making the students understand the lesson can be seen below.

Lecturer: *"apa itu* **referential meaning?"**
Student: "*Makna dari referensi, misalnya ketika kita membaca buku."*
Lecturer: "*Yang lain*?"
Student: silent
Lecturer: *"Siapa yang bisa menjawab, cepatlah. Bagaimana saya bisa memberikan nilai kepada kamu jika diam saja. Proses ini penting."*
Some students tried to answer the question, ut no one was correct.
Lecturer: just repeated the students' answer by saying, *"Ya, makna referential adalah seperti …."*

The lecturer's responsibility was caracterized by his or her preparation before coming to class. If he or she cannot give contribution to the students, she or he can be supposed as irresponsible lecturer. The above data show that the lecturer did not have any preparation before coming to class.

c. *Being inconsistent*

The following data can describe the lecturer's inconsistency of applying the rules of learning.

When the lecturer came late, she said: "*Mis kurang sehat, tolong dimaklumi ya"*. When she did the same at another time she said, *"Mis sibuk, banyak sekali pekerjaan yang akan diselesaikan, sehingga terlambat"* however, when one of the students came late, she commented, *"Kenapa kamu terlambat?"* and reminded her not to be late again.

d. *Being unaware of the students*

This dialog occured when one of the students did not do his homework by arguing that one of his family was sick so that he could not accomplish his assignment. The lecturer who did not believe with the students' answer said, "*Apa urusan saya dengan masalah kamu, hari ini ibu kamu, kemaren nenek kamu, besok siapa lagi yang sakit?* "

Eventhough, the answer seemed illogically, the lecturer's response did not show her wisdom as an educator. But it described that she was unaware of the students' problem.

e. *Being inappreciative*

The following data show that the lecturer did not appreciate the student.

1) During the learning process, one of the students asked a question to the lecturer about one term as te following dialog.

Student: **"what does … mean?"**
Lecturer: **"That's silly question.** *Masak itu saja ditanyakan."*

The answer is a description of negative politeness. The lecturer did not appreciate the student who has tried to involve in interaction. If the question is considered easy, the lecturer can ask the student to find the answer himself or ask the other students to answer. So the lecturer does not need to say as what she or he did.

2) The situation happened when a lecturer introduced the lesson vigirously so that she did not realize that the students could not catch the idea she explained. While explaining, she simulataneously asked a student to answer a question, but could not be answered by the student. Then the lecturer said, *"Bisa ndak menjawabnya. Why? Anda ndak baca buku."*

The utterance is a form of accusation that the students did not read and the lecturer did not give chance to the student to tell the reason why he or could not answer the question. The student who read the lesson,

but could not understand will remain silent. This politeness is called negative politeness that should be avoided by the lecturer for it can affect the students' spirit in learning.

E.   CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Strategy of politeness used by the lecturers in classroom interaction involves positive and negative politeness strategies. The positive strategies are those used by the lecturers with positive attitude. It includes making the students comforted, being consistent, being responsible, being industrious, being appreciative, and being aware. All strategies are useful for creating good learning situation so that learning becomes enjoyable. Therefore, the lecturers are suggested to apply this strategy during the classroom interaction.

On the other hand, the negative strategies include being angry, being inconsistent, being irresponsible, being unaware, and being inappreciative. The strategies are related to negative attitude unuseful for learning improvement. Therefore, they are suggested not to be used, with the exception, when the students break the norms. The lecturer may be angry with the students as long as it is not done emotionally or it is done for the sake of educating them.

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