

An Analysis of Politeness Strategies of Disagreement: The Case of Students of English Education Study Program in one State Islamic University in Sumatera, Indonesia

Witria Windika

witriawindika@gmail.com

Kindergarden School Teacher in Lahat, South Sumatera, Indonesia

Abstract

The pupoposes of this study were (1) to find out the realizations of politeness strategies of disagreement by the sixth semester students of English Education students of Islamic State University in Sumatera, and (2) to figure out the most common types of politeness strategy used by them. The study employed qualitative research. The data were taken through a written test and Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The sample was taken by using cluster random sampling method which consisted of 12 male students and 12 female students. The study revealed that female and male English language learners experienced four types of politeness strategy: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record politeness, and off-record politeness with negative politeness as the most frequent strategy used by female and male English language learners. The result of the study showed that negative politeness was dominant politeness strategy which had value of 63,33%. The second place was bald-on-record (23,33%), the third place was positive politeness (11,67%), and the last one was off-record (1,67%). The conclusion of this study indicated that in expressing politeness strategy for disagreement, both female and male respondents tended to perform negative politeness strategy.

Keywords: disagreement, face-threatening act, gender, politeness, politeness strategies

Manuscript submitted: March 4, 2019

Manuscript revised: April 4, 2019

Accepted for publication: May 16, 2019

Introduction

The term language can be used to refer to a variety of concepts or things, such as the particular form of words and speech used by the people of a country, area or social group, or the method of human communication using spoken or written words. Language has an important role in human life because it was part of communication and culture. It was according to behaviour of the speaker. That is why it will develop the relation between the speaker, even it is good or bad relation. Cakrawati also adds that language is an important media for communication. If there is no language so it will be difficult to communicate with others (as cited in Nadjmuddin, 2012, p.2086). It will also be complicated and the relation can not be built.

Language has been used for communication by people from different countries, cultures and many things. According to Meyer, language is a different communication system, for example in communicating, humans and animals have different ways of communicating (as cited in Imam, 2016, p.104). Brown also argued that language is a tool to communicate (as cited in Holandyah & Utami, 2015, p.15). People should have same language with others in order to they can communicate well. If language is different, the communication will not connect. We, as the human, use language to communicate with people around us although we have some differences such as educational background, age or sex.

There are many kinds of language that people use. One of them is English. Puspita (2016) defined that English has been recognized as the first international language in the world. It is supported by Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyraf, Makmur, and Marzulina (2018) who stated that in Indonesia, an incredibly diverse and multicultural country, English is regarded as one of the most popular foreign languages. Besides, Crystal asserted that English is the language of the world, which is used in every country and every field (as cited in Ariesca and Marzulina, 2015, p.25). In short, people all around the world are now familiar with English as it is now used in every field of people's lives.

Students in every school in Indonesia have learnt English in their lessons because English is an international language. Sharifian (2009) defines that English as an international language refers to a paradigm for thinking, research and practice. In Indonesia, English lesson is learnt from primary school. English lesson is included in educational curriculum in Indonesia. Although, according to Wannaruk and Amnuai, English is not formally used in people's daily communication either orally or in written but the students of university would use full English (as cited in Samanhudi, 2017, p.61). As the unifier languages, English can be used by people for communication which is expressed in both linguistic and non-linguistic ways. Communication by means of language, may be referred as linguistic communication. Meanwhile, the other ways of communication is to use non-linguistic ways which are, for example, laughing, smiling, shrieking, which are learned under the linguistic schools, named Pragmatics. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics which studies how language is used for communication within a certain context. One of its concerns is politeness strategy. Native speakers communicate each other with different purposes and they use politeness strategy in certain context and situation. Sedyawati defined that English language, character is translated into morality. Morality includes important things like attitude and manner (as cited in Janawi, 2001, p.36). We as the human being should have good moral. When we talk to other people, we should use good words and respect others. When people realize politeness and perform it in human interaction, it is possible for them to maintain their social relationship with others. In addition, Yule asserts that politeness is used in communication as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face (as cited in Rezasanti, 2011, p.29). People can maintain social relationship with others. Politeness is also used to decrease the possible conflict will happen. Sometimes people are not aware of another person's face. Then, if speaker does not care for the face of the addressee, he or she might threaten the face of speaker or hearer then it is called Face Threatening Acts (henceforth, FTA).

FTAs happen in communication and can threaten both positive and negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that negative face is the desire of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others. Positive face is the desire of every member that what he wants be desirable to at least to some others. All people certainly ever showed their positive or negative face. It can certain happen because people is human being. We as the human being should have good moral when talk to others. According to the Shihab, "the effort to maintain Islamic moral values is to comprehend the values in Al- Qur'an comprehensively", (as cited in Abdurrahmansyah, 2001, p.70). If people can understand the value and content of Al-Qur'an as comprehensively, they can have good attitude and moral. When people communicate, they can respect each other. Therefore, that is why we as human should have a certain attitude to people, whether they are parents, friend, senior, junior, or the human who more older than us. In addition, according to Unal and Iseri, attitude is characterized as a learner disposed that individual behaviour in front of people (as cited in Lestari & Holandyah, 2016, p.48). If people have good attitude and respect others, they will have good relation with people around them. Therefore, people should know and learn about politeness strategies.

Regarding to politeness strategies, native speakers communicate to each other with different purposes and they use politeness strategy in certain context and situation. Every politeness strategy has its own function, for example politeness strategy for the purpose to command, request, suggest, remind, threaten, promise, hate, be angry, critic, complaining, disagreeing, etc. Among those purposes mentioned above, politeness in expressing disagreement is interesting to study since it is regularly used and it may cause some negative reactions or feeling in interpersonal communication. In addition, this study also focused on finding out the most common types of politeness strategies that are used by male and female with the reason that politeness is usually connected to gender. Gender refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that women usually use simple language when talking to others because of the status they play role in society. Woman usually is more polite than man when they speak to others although they disagree. Woman usually avoids conflict.

Regarding the problem above, there have been many studies which have been undertaken to investigate politeness strategy in disagreement. Gaspić (2014) in his study showed that male students had higher value than female students in using Bald on Record (BOR) strategy. Second study from Rezasanti (2010) revealed that female and male English Language learners had realized all four types of politeness strategy. Based on the study above, the objectives of the study here are (1) to find out the politeness strategy used by male and female students of English Education Study Program of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang when they are expressing disagreement; and (2) to figure out the most common type of politeness strategy used by male and female student of English Education Study Program of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang when they are expressing disagreement.

Review of Literature

The concept of politeness strategies

According to Fauzi (2010), politeness courtesy as a good application of good manners and ethics while communicating. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that linguistic modesty such as efforts to keep each other's feelings both listeners and speakers while interacting. Politeness is very important for human because human should have a certain attitude to people, whether they are parents, friend, senior, junior, or the human who more older than us. People should have good relation with other because people as the human being. People need help with people around them. Therefore, it can be concluded that, if we, as the human should speak polite to others to maintain social relationship with others. When people realize politeness and perform it in human interaction, it is possible for them to maintain their social relationship with others.

There are five types of politeness strategy: positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, bald on-record strategy, and off-record strategy, and no FTA.

- 1) Positive Politeness
This strategy tries to minimize the threat to the audience's positive face. This can be done by attending to the audience's needs, feeling of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness.
- 2) Negative Politeness
This strategy tries to minimize threat to the interlocutor's negative face. The negative politeness also recognizes the hearer's face. However, it also admits that the speaker is in some way imposing on the hearer.
- 3) Bald on Record
This strategy is used when people know each other so there is no need to maintain face. In this strategy, FTA is performed "[...] in the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way possible" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.30).
- 4) Off Record

This strategy is more indirect. Speakers do not impose something on the listeners, so the face is not directly threatened.

5) No FTA

This strategy is simply that speaker avoid offending hearer at all with this particular FTA.

The concept of disagreement

Disagreement often occurs in every days conversation. Koczogh believes that the term disagreement is complicated and still requires further research in politeness or not and accuracy or not (as cited in Rezasanti, 2011, p.40). Ramadhani (2012) stated that, disagreement is used when we have different opinions or ideas about something. We often disagree with people around us such as our parent, friend, sister, brother etc. We often disagree when we have different opinion and sometimes it made our relations tretchable.

Methods

Research design and participants of the study

This study was a qualitative research with descriptive approach. According to Moleong (2014), “it has a descriptive study is an investigation way with compulsory the data by words, pictures, and does not statistics” (p.6). The subject of this study was all of the sixth semester students who had taken Pragmatic course. The students in the sixth semester consisted of four class. The sample of this study was 12 male students and 12 female students. I chose the sample by using Cluster Random Sampling. I divided the sample into two groups. There were male groups and female groups. Because I analyzed the differences realization politeness strategies in disagreement and the most common type of politeness strategies used by male and female students, I picked three male students and three female students from each class as the sample.

Data collection

I used questionnaire as the method of collecting the data. I used DCT as the instrument that was adopted from Guodong and Jing (2005). The techniques in getting the data were (1) distributing the questionnaire by using DCT, and (2) taking notes on their expression in the paper. The procedures of DCT questionnaire distribution were, first of all, I gave the sample questionnaire. Then, I gave a brief explanation about the questionnaire for making the sample understand about the questionnaire. It consisted of the five scenarios of DCT, in which the subjects were expected to disagree with a higher status, three with peers and one with a lower status. The sample were given 45 minutes for answered the questions. I used Discourse Completion Test (DCT). In this part, I analyzed the realization of politeness strategies used by male and female English language learners when expressing disagreement.

To answer the second research problem, I also used DCT to find out the common types of politeness strategies that used by male and female students. The data from DCT in this study was categorized based on the samples' responses in the questionnaire. In this case, it was about what types of politeness strategy used by samples, whether they were bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record and no FTA based on Brown and Levinson's theories (1987). After that, I described the data which were found, and then it was checked by expert whether it was right or not. After that, it was explained.

In this research, I obtained data which were valid. This part would show the way to check data by establishing trustworthiness. To check the trustworthiness of the data, I used triangulation. According to Moleong (2011), a technique that utilizes data validity that exploits something else is called tranulation. Triangulation was a method to enhance researcher's understanding about what was being investigated. In this research, I used investigator triangulation. This type of triangulation was done by asking experts or other researchers and

investigators for rechecking the credibility of the data gained from the research. After I analyzed the data, the result was rechecked by three lecturers of English. The process of rechecking the data by experts showed the implementation of investigator triangulation itself.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed to find out the influences of three contextual variables (social distance, relative power, and ranking of imposition) towards the realization of politeness strategy by repondents. It was analyzed by using percentage. To calculate the percentage of types of politeness strategies, there is the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

P = Result of Percentage

F = Result of Types of Politeness Strategies

N = All Types of Politeness Strategies

Findings

The realization of politeness strategies used by male and female students

Both male and female students experienced four types of politeness strategies. There were several differences found in the politeness strategies used by male and female students. The differences of using politeness strategies that could be seen on the table below:

Table 1. Type of politeness strategies

No	Participants	type of politeness strategies				
		<u>Negative Politeness</u>	<u>Positive Politeness</u>	<u>Bald on Record</u>	<u>Off Record</u>	<u>NO FTA</u>
1.	Male	58,33%	15 %	25 %	1,66 %	-
2.	Female	68,33 %	10 %	21,66 %	-	-

The example of realization of politeness strategies that can see on the table below :

Female	Oh, <i>I'm sorry sir but</i> honestly I really do it by myself. I think that you can tell me about the reason why you can directly said that's not pure my ideas.	Negative politeness
	<i>I agree</i> for your great plan sir, <i>but</i> how about other people who are not placed in the new department ? Where we will be placed if the new department that will be opened. Can you give a solution for this problem ?	Positive politeness
	<i>I'm so sorry. I don't think so.</i> I think this data is enough and I just need to add more supporting information, don't I ?	Negative politeness
	<i>I don't think so.</i> I think it doesn't matter to use the technology because it will make people to do anything easier, and for the problems, it can be reduced by the time. So, don't worry about it.	Bald on record
	OK. <i>It doesn't matter</i> if you think so. But, <i>you have to know</i> that in that kind of situation man is stronger to survive while a woman will dace the difficulties same as the children. They can't do anything. Also, they panic. So. It will better to safe the woman and children first.	Negative politeness

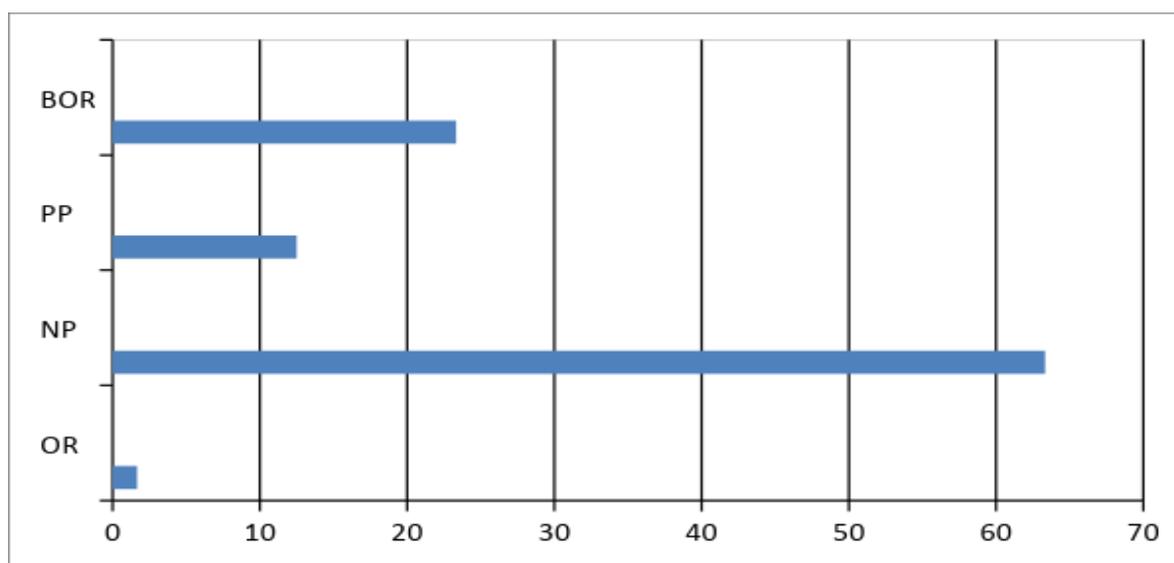


Figure 1. The most common types of politeness strategies

Note :

BOR : Bald on Record

PP : Positive Politeness

NP : Negative Politeness

OR : Off Record

Based on the chart above, it indicated that the participants used all Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy. Negative politeness was the most appeared strategy in situations which were related in social distance between speaker and hearer. Negative politeness (NP) had an average value of 63,33 %. The participants mostly used NP as what Brown and Levinson said that NP is used when the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there was a higher potential for awkwardness or embarrassment. The use of NP dominated in all situations which were separated by social distance.

Off Record (OR) which had value as 1,66 % was the least value of politeness strategies. OR was mostly appeared in equal and lower status. As what Brown and Levinson say, OR can be done where speaker wants to do an Face Threatening Act (FTA), but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it. In equal status, the participants preferred to produce disagreement directly rather than give hints or clues. OR was left behind from BOR which stood in the second place. Bald on Record (BOR), which stood in the second place, had value of 23,33 %. BOR mostly appeared in equal status as 15%. The participants mostly used BOR as what Brown and Levinson (1987) said "BOR is used when great efficiency was intended whenever S wanted to do the Face Threatening Act with maximum efficiency more than speaker wants to satisfy hearers face, even to any degree", (p.95). The use of BOR dominated in all situations and status which were separated by social distance.

Positive Politeness (PP) which had value as 12,5 % stood as third place of politeness strategy. PP mostly appeared in equal situation. As what Brown and Levinson (1987), said "disagreement threatens to the positive face of the hearer, PP should be the most appeared value in showing disagreement, but in fact, PP stands as the third appeared strategy" (p.66). The value of PP could be affected by the background knowledge of the speaker. It was also caused by the lack of understanding about the use politeness strategy in showing disagreement.

Off Record (OR) which had value as 1,66 % was the least value of politeness strategies which were affected by social distance. From the participants, it was found that the highest value of OR was in lower status as 1,66%. Besides, it was also found that the lowest value of NP was in 13,33%. In lower situation, the value of OR was 1,66%. It could be stated that when speaker has closer distance with hearer, the appearance of OR is greater. In equal situation, the participants preferred to produce disagreement directly rather than gave hints or clues. The most appeared strategy of OR were overstate and use metaphor. "By using OR politeness, speaker could run less risk of his act and could avoid responsibility for the potentially face-damaging interpretation" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.71).

The effect of status levels to the type of politeness strategy made the use of NP strategy becoming the most appeared strategy in all situations. Based on the chart above, it showed that NP had an average values as 63,33 %. Status level affects someone in producing utterances. People prefer to use more polite sentences when they are talking to someone who has higher level than him. When speaker is in higher situation, the value of Negative Politeness (NP) becomes higher. When speaker was in lower situation, the value of NP became lower. NP in higher situation had a value as 60% while NP in lower situation had a value as 13,33%.

Off Record (OR) which had value 1,66 % was the least appeared politeness strategies which were affected by social distance. OR mostly appeared in lower and equal situation. OR was left behind from BOR which stood in the second place. The value of OR could be affected by the background knowledge of the speaker. It was also caused by the lack of understanding about the use politeness strategy in showing disagreement.

Discussion

I found some interesting data when analyzing the sentences. Negative Politeness (NP) was the most frequently strategy which was used by the male and female students in almost every situation. NP was the most frequently appeared strategy with the value of 63,33 %. In second place, there was Bald on Record (BOR) as 23,33 %. In the third place, there was PP as 12,5%. In the last position, there was OR as 1,66 %. As what Brown and Levinson (1987) say "disagreement threatens to the hearer's positive face", (p.66). It means that the used of politeness strategy should stand as the highest values. But in fact, the value of Positive Politeness (PP) was the third level of all strategy.

The use of NP was affected by language which was used by the participants in daily conversation. In Indonesian context, when showing disagreement, they prefer to say something that they recognizes the hearer's face but it is also recognized that they are in some way imposing on them. The use of NP could also be affected by the use of DCT as an instrument in collecting the data. DCT tries to construct the unreal situation. However, in real situation, they should be more reluctant and will consider not using some words which show rudeness as in the following examples:

I'm sorry sir, honestly, it's real from me I do it by myself.

I think I can't sir. I'm sorry, in my opinion I'm not appropriate with that position because

.....

Thank you for your suggestion bro, but I'm sure if my data is enough.

In Off Record (OR) strategy, I concluded that when speakers were in a close relationship, the value of OR will be used by speaker. In close situation, OR had value as 1,66 %. Such as strategy in OR which appears are strategy 5 (overstate), and 9 (use metaphor).

In familiar and equal relationship, there were some sentences which contain PP which is in the form of claiming common ground : seeking agreement : safe topic repetition. The sentence was as follows:

Thank you for your attention.

Thank you for your suggestion.

The words “thank you” were also classified as PP which is in the form seeking agreement. There were also some sentences which showed rudeness or impoliteness. The examples are as follows:

..... *Can you give a solution for this problem ?*

..... *you have to democrats boss to be a good boss.*

Those sentences were uttered by female students. Those sentences seemed that speaker did not care about maintaining of hearer’s face. Speaker was disposed to act rude and to utter sentence which is deliberately threaten to the positive face of hearer. Female students had higher value than female students in using Negative Politeness (NP) strategy. Female students used NP as 68,33 % while male students used NP as 58,33 %. It indicated that male students preferred to say something directly and sometimes did not care of maintaining the hearer’s face, while female students preferred to used delicate sentences in disagreement.

The next interesting data came from the effect of social distance to the type of politeness strategy used. Wardhaugh states “social distance affects to the sentence between speaker and hearer” (as cited in Rezasanti, 2010, p.33). It clearly represented the use of NP in situations of the DCT which were affected by social distance. Speaker preferred to use NP such as strategy 2 (hedge, question) and strategy 6 (apologizing) in delivering disagreement. It was affected by the background culture of the participants. In Indonesian context, when someone wants to show disagreement they sometimes use apologizing words such as “sorry.” Even when they do not use “sorry,” they would use some words which showed that there was no pressure of accepting their disagreement. The sentences were often started with “I think” as in the strategy 2 (hedge, question).

Moreover, in showing disagreement, both male and female students preferred to used NP. The major reason for negative politeness strategy (NP) usage was due to recognizing the addressees’ negative face needs. It was assumed that they believed by saying disagreement indirectly, it could soften the disagreeing response from the addressee. In addition, not only it can avoid conflict happens, but can also restrain in making someone feel embarrassed or losing face. In other words, it can maintain the harmony, of the communication between the respondents and the addressee.

The students mostly used weak form of disagreement. According to Pomerantz, “Weak form of disagreement is disagreement that occur in the agreement-plus-disagreement”(as cited in Rezasanti, 2010, p.37). The examples were as as follows:

Well, it’s a great plan, boss but I have another plan

..... *I think you did wrong thought. What you are saying right now, it’s not true, these are my idea.*

..... *I made it by myself. You can ask me the questions*

There were some markers which showed that speaker appeared to agree in the beginning of the sentence and to end the sentence by disagreement. Those sentences had form of agreement and are then followed by disagreement. Weak forms of disagreement which appeared

as in the above sentences were sentences which involved in Positive Politeness strategy number 6 (Avoid disagreement).

Conclusion

As explained previously, this study had investigated politeness strategies in disagreement by the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang. I could conclude that the result of the study was the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang used four politeness strategies: positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, bald on record politeness strategy, and off record politeness strategy. The most frequently used strategy was negative politeness. It happened for both male and female respondents.

Since negative politeness was the most frequent strategy used by the students, it was proven that the sample tended to recognize the addressees' negative face needs. It was assumed, that they believed that by saying disagreement indirectly, it could soften the disagreeing response to the addressee. In addition, not only it could avoid conflict happens, it could also restrain in making someone feel embarrassed or losing face. In other words, it could maintain the harmony, of the communication between the respondents and the addressee.

Further research may also employ this study by conducting a similar research with different speech act. Here, the further research can observe politeness strategy when expressing apologizing, agreement, and requesting.

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