

AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE POLITENESS USED IN THE INTERACTION IN THE CLASSROOM AT PUTRA PUTRI BANGSA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

This research explores the use of language politeness strategies in classroom interactions between an English teacher and fifth-grade students at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School. A descriptive qualitative research method was used in this study. Data were collected through non-participant observation and documentation techniques, including field notes and video recordings during three classroom sessions conducted in April 2025. The research involved one English teacher and 18 fifth-grade students, comprising nine male and nine female participants. The results revealed a total of 290 politeness strategies used by the teacher, with bald on record being the most dominant (191 occurrences), followed by negative politeness (41), positive politeness (40), and off record (18). Meanwhile, students produced a total of 315 politeness strategies, with positive politeness being the most frequently used (180), followed by off record (45), bald on record (58), and negative politeness (32). These findings show that the teacher commonly employed direct and explicit forms of communication to control the classroom, maintain discipline, and provide clear instructions. Conversely, students more often used polite expressions to show respect, request permission, and maintain harmonious relationships with peers and the teacher. In conclusion, the use of politeness strategies in the classroom setting was appropriate and aligned with each participant's communicative role. The strategies supported a respectful, effective, and engaging learning environment, emphasizing the importance of politeness in fostering positive teacher-student interactions.

Keywords: *Classroom Interaction, Elementary School, Politeness*

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is exchanging the information, ideas, thoughts or feelings between two or more people using various methods like language, signs, writing, and symbols to transfer the message and understand each other. According to Nurmawati et al (2019) communication as interaction in the classroom refers to the relationship which is build between student-teacher. Establish a positive teacher-student relationship in a classroom by having the characteristics of good communications, respect in the classroom, and the interest in teaching from the teacher point of view and learning from student. Language is use for

communication to convey one's intention to each other in social interaction (Manik & Hutagaol., 2015). Language serves as a tool through which social interaction occurs. But language is also important for cultural representation, hence, cultural representation, and the preservation of knowledge, verbal or nonverbal, as it is the foundation for these aspects. Therefore, language might be a correspondence framework that permits the people to explicit contemplations, sensations, and ideas through talked, composed, or marked pictures. It is made up of words, linguistic use, and the standards that help to impart meaning and encourage understanding between people or gatherings. Speech patterns are very important aspect of humanity the very thing that allows us to interact with each other & forms the foundation of our culture as well as knowledge sharing, has evolved over periods by adapting to both changing society & technology. Furthermore, politeness is an approach to particular respect and consideration and polite or considerate speech and actions. This is reflected in the language you use, for example using "please" and "thank you", tone of voice, listening without interrupting and respecting the feelings and opinions of others. Politeness is adaptable in every society because every utterance conveyed can be considered polite or can also be said to be impolite, looking at the conditions, place and the interlocutor during the interaction (Pradita et al., 2024).

Moreover, based on the result of the interview at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School on Tuesday, February 4th, 2025. The interview was carried out to the teacher. There were still students who speak disrespectfully or do activities without permission. Therefore, the teacher takes action by giving points to them. Based on the teacher's statement, there was indeed student who said polite words every day in the school. This happens in formal and informal situation, namely learning process occurs in the classroom. Example of polite words spoken by student during learning process including "Excuse me miss, I want to go to toilet?", "Excuse me miss, can I take my pencil?" and others. This is the reason for the researcher is in conducting the research fifth grade student at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School.

II. LITERATURE RIVIEW

According to Brown and Levinson, there are two types of face: positive face, which reflects the desire to be liked, appreciated, and included, and negative face, which represents the need for autonomy and freedom from imposition. Certain speech acts, such as requests, commands, criticisms or refusals, threaten the face of either the speaker or the listener, which will prompt the individuals to adopt politeness strategies to prevent face threats. Direct commands such as, "Give me your notes." threatens the listener's negative face through imposition on

their freedom, whereas a statement like “Your work isn’t very good.” tends to threaten their positive face by leading them to feel underappreciated. Speakers use various politer strategies to manage these FTAs, which can be classified as involving on-record and off-record approaches.

Pragmatics is a major study of linguistics that defines the hidden meanings of a writer and speaker towards the conjoining effort of linguistic form (Mazulfah, 2019). Pragmatics is a sub-field of linguistics that studies how meaning comes not only from the literal meanings of words but also from context, such as the intentions of the speaker, social norms and the relationship between communicators. It is concerned with the use of language in real-world situations and encompasses how the context influences meaning, including factors like implicatures, politeness, and turn-taking rules.

The study of sociolinguistics is a multifaceted discipline that delves into the intricate relationships between language and social constructs such as social situations, societal institutions, and cultural standards (Holmes, 2013). It not only examines how language is used in various social contexts but also explores how it differs among social groups, offering insights into the ways language functions as a tool for communication, identity formation, and social interaction (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021).

Classroom interaction is a very key to the learning process, which reflects the interaction between the teachers and the students and between students themselves. When students are able to work effectively together, then they can be more active in a conversation, share their ideas, and practice critical and social thinking skills. There are many different types of interactions, including teacher-student, student-student, and even teacher-teacher interactions. According to (Nurmawati et al, 2019) a teacher and students who have the qualities of good communications, respect in a classroom, and show interest in teaching from the point of view of the teacher and learning from a student will establish a positive relationship in the classroom. These interactions guide the learning process and impact student motivation, engagement, and performance. Like schools, teachers too play an important part in creating a supportive environment through feedback, promotion of participation and tailoring their teaching plans according to student needs.

By employing politeness behavior within the interaction, these interactions create a respectful and empowering learning environment in which both the teacher and the student feel respected and accomplished within their communications.

Verbal Interaction

According to Wahyuni (2018), stated that verbal interaction encompasses the skill of conveying ideas effectively through both spoken and written words, involving mastery of vocabulary to select appropriate terms that resonate with the audience, as well as the ability to organize words in a logical manner; it is a fundamental aspect of traditional intelligence frameworks.

Nonverbal Interaction

Nonverbal interaction encompasses active listening, where teachers are encouraged to attentively and empathetically listen to their students as well as observe peer discussions, while body language, accounting for over 50% of interaction, also plays a crucial role (Wahyuni, 2018). Nonverbal interaction has multiple functions. It can repeat the verbal message, accent the verbal message, complement, or contradict the verbal message, regulate interactions or substitute for the verbal message (especially if it is blocked noise, interruption, etc).

Language politeness is very important to be owned and applied by students and teachers Alief & Nashruddin (2022). Politeness formulas such as greetings, thank you, and righteous requests allow you to structure communication and build the interaction in a much smoother and healthier way. This statement is supported by (Gleason et al, 2009) the social importance of politeness formulas is fairly obvious; politeness forms may, however, serve important linguistic functions as well. The quality of the relations between teachers and students also improves with the use of polite language, contributing to the encouragement of active work and the decrease of conflicts and quarrels in the educational environment (Episiasi et al., 2023). Therefore, politeness is not only about social customs but also a vital part of better and purposeful communication.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the writer use qualitative and descriptive method. Qualitative and descriptive research method have been very common procedures for conducting research in many disciplines, including education, psychology, and social sciences (Nassaji, 2015). In addition, Creswell and Poth (2017) stated qualitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing data which is no numerical, such as language. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive method. This type of research focused on the description of the research project. Therefore, the researcher chose descriptive qualitative research as the appropriate research design for this study.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the qualitative research focuses on understanding the nature of phenomena, including their characteristics, context, and perspectives, without emphasizing numerical data or causal relationships.

In doing this study, the writer used technique of collecting data observation and documentation. Observation becomes a scientific tool and the method of data collection for the researcher Kothari (2004). Observation becomes a scientific tool and a data collection method if it is planned in a systematic way, recorded and analyzed for accuracy and objectivity. While not useful for testing certain hypotheses, it provides unique access to research behaviors, interactions, and events in situ, and is considered a valuable tool for obtaining robust, ecologically valid data considering how we connect. In this research, the researcher used non-participant observation. The observer observes as a detached emissary without any attempt on the part to experience through participation what others feel, the observation of this type is often termed as non-participant observation (Kothari., 2004).

In this case, the researcher only acts as an independent observer, the meaning that the researcher is not involved in interactions in the classroom. Furthermore, documentation is the use of data to record, arrange, and retain detailed information about the methods of data collection, sources, analysis and experimentation. This creates a complete link to the research, ensuring that the research is transparent, reliable, and reproducible by making it clear how the data was acquired and used. The nature of good documentation of analysis operations is something we have to discover inductively (Miles and Huberman., 2014). In this case, the researcher used video recording to get real documentation from the teacher and students.

IV. FINDINGS

This research aims to answer the following question: “What types of politeness interactions were used by the teacher and students at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School?” The following the findings was found by the researcher at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School as follows. Politeness strategy used by English teacher and student in English classroom, after conducting the research, there was some data that have been used by the researcher to collect politeness strategy data using Brown and Levinson’s theory (1987). According to Brown and Levinson (1987) there are two types, there are on record and off record. Furthermore, on record is divided into two types namely politeness without redressive action on bald on record and politeness with redressive action, namely positive politeness and negative politeness. The following were the finding based on Brown and Levinson’s theory that the researcher used to collected data:

Table 1. The Findings of Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher

Politeness Strategies	Teacher Activities		
	First	Second	Third

	Observation	Observation	Observation
Bald on Record	104	14	73
Positive Politeness	20	11	9
Negative Politeness	6	13	22
Off Record	9	4	5
Total Number	290		

Table 1. Showed that the politeness strategies used by English teacher. Based on the table above, the researcher found that there were 290 politeness strategies, where 191 did bald on record, 40 did positive politeness, 41 did negative politeness, and 18 did off record.

Table 2. The Findings of Politeness Strategies Used by Student

Politeness Strategies	Student Activities		
	First Observation	Second Observation	Third Observation
Bald on Record	16	8	34
Positive Politeness	95	7	78
Negative Politeness	8	2	22
Off Record	6	-	39
Total Number	315		

Table 2 Showed that the politeness strategies was used by student in the classroom. The total number of politeness strategies was used by student were 315 namely 58 did bald on record, 180 did positive politeness, 32 did negative politeness, and 45 did off record.

This research was conducted in April 2025 at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School and focused on exploring the types of politeness strategies used in English classroom interactions. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study involved one English teacher and 18 fifth-grade students, evenly divided by gender. The main instruments used in collecting the data were field notes and video recordings from three classroom observations. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer, aiming to capture the natural interaction between the teacher and students without influencing the flow of communication. Each observation was recorded and carefully documented to analyze the patterns of speech and interaction.

Brown and Levinson's framework classifies politeness strategies into four types: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. The data collected from these observations were categorized based on these four strategies. From the teacher's side, a total of 290 politeness strategies were identified throughout the three classroom sessions. The most frequently used

strategy by the teacher was bald on record, appearing 191 times. This strategy is characterized by direct, clear, and unambiguous communication. Such use by the teacher is understandable, as it reflects a need to maintain classroom discipline, provide instructions, or manage time efficiently. The teacher also used 40 instances of positive politeness, 41 of negative politeness, and 18 off record strategies, indicating occasional efforts to build rapport, show respect, or imply meaning without being direct.

In contrast, the students showed a different pattern in their use of politeness strategies. Out of 315 total instances, the most frequently used was positive politeness with 180 occurrences. This strategy often includes expressions of friendliness, encouragement, and cooperation, suggesting that students were trying to establish or maintain good relationships with their peers and teacher. This finding also reflects the social dynamics among students, who tend to prefer solidarity and harmony in their communication. Off record strategies were used 45 times, showing that some students also employed indirect or ambiguous statements to avoid confrontation or save face. Meanwhile, bald on record strategies were used 58 times, and negative politeness appeared 32 times, suggesting that although students occasionally communicated directly or showed deference, these strategies were less common than their more socially oriented counterparts.

Each observation revealed consistent patterns. During the first observation, the teacher predominantly used bald on record strategies, with 104 instances, while students heavily favored positive politeness with 95 instances. The second observation showed a decrease in overall usage but still followed a similar trend, with the teacher and students continuing to use bald on record and positive politeness respectively. Interestingly, the third observation revealed a notable rise in off record strategies among students, totaling 39 instances, suggesting that by the end of the study, students may have grown more confident or playful in their interactions, relying more on subtle, implied communication.

These findings suggest that the teacher's communication style was largely directive and task-focused, relying heavily on direct speech to manage classroom activities. In contrast, students preferred a more relational and supportive communication style, indicating their desire to maintain social harmony and positive peer relationships. The consistent use of positive politeness and off record strategies among students may also reflect the influence of the teacher's occasional use of those same strategies, showing that teacher modeling plays a role in shaping student interaction patterns.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings presented above, the researcher has examined the politeness strategies employed by the English teacher and students during classroom interactions. The study showed that teachers often used direct and clear language to manage the classroom but also employed polite forms to soften requests and give feedback. Students mainly used polite expressions to show respect and build good relationships, especially during group work, although occasional impolite behaviors like interruptions were observed. Over time, students began to use more indirect and nuanced ways of communicating, reflecting their growing understanding of politeness. As outlined in the previous chapter, this study addressed specific research questions. The findings of this study are supported by previous research, such as (Manik & Hutagaol, 2015., Pradita et al., 2024). Furthermore, the study revealed that politeness strategies used by teachers play a crucial role in creating effective classroom interactions. Positive politeness, such as giving praise and being friendly, encourages student engagement and compliance, while negative politeness helps maintain student autonomy. Politeness expressions and maxims also support respectful communication and positive teacher-student relationships. Overall, context-appropriate politeness strategies contribute to a cooperative, supportive, and engaging learning environment. The teacher consistently responded to such behavior using indirect and polite strategies. The main objective was to identify the types of politeness strategies used by both the teacher and students at Putra Putri Bangsa Elementary School.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented above, it could be conclude this research highlights the important role that politeness strategies play in classroom discourse. It shows how both teachers and students adapt their communication based on context, roles, and intentions. The teacher's dominance in using direct language reflects their authority and need for control, while the students' preference for friendly and indirect forms shows their inclination toward maintaining group cohesion. Understanding these dynamics can help educators develop more effective communication strategies to support respectful, engaging, and productive classroom environments.

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