

Politeness strategies employed by teachers in making requests to eleventh-grade students

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Abstract

This study aims to find the types of politeness strategies used and the implications of using politeness strategies in the teaching and learning process by using the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). This study used qualitative research with descriptive analysis with eleventh-grade students as the participants. As a result, there were four types of politeness strategies that occurred when the teacher made a request: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. According to the statistics, the most prevalent politeness method utilised by teachers in making requests was the bald-on-record strategy. A bald-on record technique was employed since the idea presented became clearer and unequivocal, and it did not take long for pupils to understand. While the least was off record because the utterances with this strategy were considered to be unclear and ambiguous, and not all students could interpret the meaning of the utterance. This study also found out the implications of using politeness strategies, which were effective communication, cooperative interaction, and less imposition. Besides, the result can be used as evaluation material for teachers and schools in using politeness strategies to persuade the students to fulfil the request.

Keywords: *Politeness strategies; requesting; teaching learning process*

INTRODUCTION

English language is so powerful on a global scale in practically every element of life that it becomes the most used (lingua franca) in this world (Iftanti & Maunah, 2021). Furthermore, the rapid technological developments in the field of information technology make the global community in the current industrial revolution 4.0 has become a world community that is not hindered by distance and time. This aspect makes English becomes a compulsory subject in schools and universities in Indonesia (Alfarisy, 2021). One of the goals of learning English is to enable Indonesian people to communicate and access information in English from many countries. On the other hand, English teaching goals are to make learners have the ability in the concept of communicative competence, grammatical knowledge, and pragmatic competence (Nugroho & Rekha, 2020). There is also the concept of politeness in English which concerns how to speak and act in social interactions to show respect and appreciation for other people (Obidovna, 2022). According to Hutahaeen et al., (2021) as cited in (Sa'idah & Toyyibah, 2022) states that politeness can also be demonstrated in the way language is used as a communication tool to transmit thoughts or ideas, in addition to in attitudes and behavior. In education,

applying politeness is essential as politeness is pertinent and significant, particularly during teaching and learning process.

Politeness greatly influences how people do speech acts, such as when a teacher making requests to the students during the class. In the classroom, the teacher surely uses many utterances which display politeness strategies to communicate with students during learning process (Widiadnya et al., 2018). In an EFL (English Foreign Language) classroom, the teacher often asks the students to pay attention to the lessons, to answer a question, or to perform in front of the class to see their ability to use English. This is adjusted to the conditions of the class because there are some students in several schools who are struggling to be requested to answer questions or perform in front of the class. Several factors cause it, one of the factors that can influence student willingness is how the teacher asks them to do the instruction, whether the teacher uses language that makes students feel comfortable or uses intimidating language. This issue is very influential on the development of students' English skills.

However, the students will be able to accomplish a lot in a certain field if they have a positive attitude toward that subject (Ahmed et al., 2021). For example, the students who have positive attitudes toward English subjects will do their best in working on the assignments, thus the students are fine and willing to fulfill the request if they have prepared the answer before they are asked to write the answer to their homework on the whiteboard. (Ahmed et al., 2021) conclude it is clear that good attitudes benefit language learners and help them achieve proficiency successfully, while negative attitudes among students will result in decreased motivation and unsatisfactory proficiency achievement.

Therefore, the teacher has a role as an instructor or controller of how the class takes place so that the students can follow the teaching and learning process properly (Bond, 2022). Though, a teacher must also be able to protect their faces, so the teacher's politeness here determines how students respond to requests. Carniasih (2011) as cited in (Widiadnya et al., 2018) states that the students will be motivated by the usage of appropriate politeness strategies. In making requests, the teacher also can apply different politeness strategies so the students are willing to fulfill the teacher's requests.

According to the explanation above, it is true that there are students who may have problems when they are requested to do instruction given by the teacher and the teacher can persuade them by using politeness strategies. Hence, the researcher is interested in analyzing the politeness strategies used by the teacher in requesting to eleventh-grade students to find out the type of politeness strategies used by the teacher in making request and figure out the implication of politeness strategies used by the teacher in making request. There are research gaps in the study conducted by the researcher compared to others. This study is more focused on classifying the politeness strategy used by the teacher in requesting the students. In this study, the researcher also analyzes the students' response to the teacher's request and the implication of using politeness strategies during teaching learning process.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative research with descriptive analysis to interpret, analyze, and explain the data with the current situation that occurs in place. The aims of this study were to analyze the politeness strategies used by the teacher in making request to the eleventh-grade students and to find out the implications of using politeness strategies in the classroom because research is focused on analyzing concrete instances in their temporal and local particularity, beginning with the actions and expressions of people in their local contexts (Flick, 2022).

This descriptive qualitative research was using various sources obtained from observation and interview to find out the kind of politeness strategies used by the teacher in making requests. The data of this study were the teacher's utterances when requesting to the students. The researcher decided to record a video to see more of the students' responses and how the teacher's utterances in making requests affected the students. The researcher also held interview with the teacher to gain more information and data related to requesting the students and to know more about the teacher's view on politeness strategies. The researcher also holds interview with the students to know more about the students' responses or reactions toward the requests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part is presenting and discussing the types of politeness strategies used by teacher in making requests and the implications of using politeness strategies in teaching learning process.

The politeness strategies used by teacher in making requests

To analyze the data, the theory of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) was used. According to the data analysis, there were 33 data of the politeness strategies used by the teacher in making request to the eleventh-grade students found during the class. The data show all of the types of politeness strategies occurred during the class. There are bald on record, positive politeness, and off record. The calculation of each type of politeness strategies is presented on the table below.

Table 1. The frequency of politeness strategies used by teacher in making request

No.	Types of politeness strategies	Frequencies
1.	Bald on record	26
2.	Positive politeness	4
3.	Negative politeness	2
4	Off record	1
Total		33

According to the total, the first used strategy was bold and record which occurred 26 times. The second strategy was positive politeness which occurred 4 times. The third strategy was negative politeness, this strategy occurred 2 times. Then, the fourth strategy was off record, this strategy was occurred 1 time. According to the table 1, it could be seen that the most type of politeness strategies used by the teacher in making request was bald

on record then followed by positive politeness, negative politeness, and the least was off record.

From the total number, the most types of politeness strategies used by teacher in making request was bald on record strategy because this strategy was unambiguous and clear. On the other hand, off record strategy became the least used politeness strategies as the table 1 showed because this strategy did not deliver the message clearly and ambiguous. In considering the level of politeness that the speaker would say to their interlocutors, there are three important social aspects stated by Brown and Levinson (1978). The three important social aspects are relative power (P) of interlocutor over speaker, the social distance (D) between the speaker and the interlocutor, and the ranking (R) of impositions concerned in doing the face-threatening act (FTA) (Widianingsih, 2022).

Bald on record

There are utterances of bald on record strategy used by teacher in making request as the following below.

Data 15

Teacher : “*Attention!* In this application, you will listen to a song, but there will be some blanks which you have to fill. For example is like that. *Look!* The dog is barking the house. So, *listen it carefully, ya!* What is the answer for this one? For example, *listen to me! Find out what is the answer!* There are some options, but you have to listen to the answer! ‘The dog is barking outside the house.’ What is the answer?”

Students : “C”

Teacher : “C? What does C say?”

Students : “Outside.”

There are various commands uttered by the teacher in requesting the students to pay attention to her explanation and to look at the whiteboard. The teacher also requests them to listen to her and find out the answer. First command is “*Attention!*” and the second command is “*Look!*” make them focus on the lesson. The teacher’s utterance “*listen it carefully, ya! Listen to me!*” shows a great urgency of the desire to be heard since the students only will be able to find the answer by listening to what the teacher says. Therefore, the teacher adds “*Find out what is the answer!*” to tell them what they have to do by listening to her. All of utterances in data 15 are bald on record strategy because those are direct imperatives (Rohim, 2015).

Data 17

Teacher : “Okay, now I’m going to give you instructions. *Please be quiet!*”

Students : “Shhh...!”

Teacher : “There are instructions I will give to you, *follow the instruction, ya!* Okay, one, number one ya, okay, *find out the application, the name of the application is LingoClip.* Not Duolingo, but LingoClip. Have you found it? Okay. The icon is like this, the color is blue. Can you find it?”

Data 17 shows the bald on record is used by minimizing the face threat (Tinhinen & Sabrina, 2017). The situation in data 17, the teacher says “*please be quiet!*” before giving instructions to students. The teacher requests the students to be silent so the students can follow the instructions that the teacher will give. This utterance is included in the bald on record strategy, but the teacher uses the word “please” to minimize threats to students’ negative faces. Then the teacher requests students to follow the instructions by saying “*you follow the instructions, okay!*” then the teacher gives the first instruction with utterance “find out the application, the name of the application is LingoClip.” The teacher clarifies her request by mentioning the name of the application that must be installed.

Data 22

Teacher : “Okay, *listen it until the rest of the song, ya!*”
Students : “Repeat, Miss!”

This situation occurs when the teacher will play a song that must be heard by students. The students immediately focus and try to catch the words in the song. For four minutes, some students look very serious listening to the song, some students seem to enjoy the song, some students try to sing along, and some others look confused. For students who have good listening and writing skills, the exercise is not too difficult. However, for students who have poor listening and writing skills, the exercise is difficult. After the song ended, the students immediately asked the teacher to play the song again.

At the beginning the teacher requests the students to listen to the song until the end by saying “*listen until the rest of the song, ya!*” This utterance is a bald on record strategy where one of them is done because of the closeness between the teacher and students. This closeness is shown by how students also request the teacher to repeat the song using the bald on record strategy because this strategy can be used when the speaker and the hearer have a close relationship (Ramdhani, 2014).

Data 23

Teacher : “Do you think Joni is a boy or a girl?”
Students : “A girl.”
Students : “A boy.”
Teacher : “Joni, Joni. A boy, a girl?”
Students : “A girl.”
Teacher : “*Read the first sentence of the first paragraph!*”
Students : “Joni was a girl!”

- Teacher : “Joni was a girl. If Joni spelled J-O-N-I, right? Not J-O-H-N-N-Y, Johnny, no. But Joni, a girl. Okay, let’s see. Where’s the lyric? I don’t... Okay, ‘Joni was a girl who lived next door’, what does it means?”
- Student 1 : “Jimmy was a neighbour, ehh... hehe...”

The situation in data 23 shows that students are confused about Joni's identity. This can be seen in the answers of students who have different answers when the teacher asks whether Joni is male or female. Students who answer that Joni is a boy are surprised because they think Joni is a boy's name. To explain Joni's identity, the teacher requests the students to look at the sentence in the first paragraph of the song's lyrics which states that Joni is a girl. The teacher even spelled Joni's name to clarify the difference in how to spell Joni and Johnny.

The imperative sentence “*Read the first sentence of the first paragraph!*” that the teacher uses in requesting students is the bald on record strategy. This strategy is used so that students immediately fulfill the teacher's request so that the teacher can explain Joni's identity in the song.

a. Positive Politeness

There are utterances of positive politeness strategy used by teacher in making request as the following below.

Data 28

- Teacher : “Okay, class, you have done your task very well. *Give applause for all of us!*”
- Students : “Yay!!”

Brown and Levinson (1987) expressed the positive politeness as a strategy that appreciates the hearer by making him/her feels like the speaker has the similar interest as the hearer (Meiratnasari et al., 2019). The data above shows a situation at the end of class when all students have completed and have submitted their assignments on time before class ends. The teacher gives praise to all students and requests the students to clap with her for all of them. In this situation, the teacher requests by saying “*Give applause for all of us!*” which involving herself as the speaker and students as the hearers. The utterance uses a positive politeness strategy where the teacher uses strategy 12, speakers and listeners are involved in the same activity.

Data 29

- Teacher : “Which group is ready to present the text? No one?”
- Students : “Just pick the group, Miss.”
- Students : “Yes, Miss.”
- Teacher : “Okay, because you want me to pick, ya. So, you have to be ready, ya. Hmm... Group Yuda, please come forward and present your procedure text!”

- Student 1 : "We are not ready, Miss."
Student 2 : "We haven't finished it, Miss."
Teacher : "Ehh... *you said you wanted me to pick. Okay, group Salamah, please come forward and present your procedure text.*"
Student 3,4,5 : "Alright, Miss."

The strategy 5 of positive politeness by Brown and Levinson is seek agreement which can be done by repeating part or all the previous utterances spoken by the former speaker (Rohim, 2015). The situation in data 29 shows that there is an agreement between the teacher and the students before the teacher requests a group to present their assignment in front of the classroom. In the beginning, the teacher gives a question as an offer if there is a group who wants to perform in front of the classroom however the students want her to pick the group and the other students are agree. Data 29 shows the teacher states the students' want before asking the group to come forward. The teacher says "*Okay, because you want me to pick, okay. So, you have to be ready, okay. Hmm... Group Yuda, please come forward and present your procedure text!*" yet the request is rejected because Group Yuda have not completed their task. Thus, the teacher states their want again before request other groups to present their work by saying "*Ehh... you said you wanted me to pick. Okay, group Salamah, please come forward and present your procedure text.*" The teacher uses a positive politeness strategy 5, seek agreement, in stating the request. The teacher acknowledges the students' want to be picked, thus she calls the group she is chosen.

b. Negative Politeness

There are utterances of negative politeness strategy used by teacher in making request as the following below.

Data 31

- Teacher : "Okay, eh, *chairman, please help me to share these texts.*"
Student : "Yes, Miss. One for each group, Miss?"
Teacher : "Yes, one group, one text."

The politeness strategy which concerns with the speaker's negative face is negative politeness. This strategy simplifies the speaker to minimize or to reduce the imposition to the hearer (Rohim, 2015). In this situation, the teacher requests the chairman to help her sharing the texts. The teacher uses negative politeness strategy 1, namely be conventionally indirect by changing imperative sentences into declarative sentences to requests student to help her share the text. The teacher uses this strategy to make the student does not feel directly ordered. The teacher also calls the student by his position in class instead of calling by his name.

Data 32

- Teacher : "Alright. *Chairman, can you help me to share the pictures with all of the groups?*"
Student : "One picture for each group, Miss?"
Teacher : "Yes."

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker can use negative politeness strategy 2 when the speaker does not want to force the hearer because the speaker acknowledges the hearer's face (Fridolini et al., 2021; Rohim, 2015). The situation in data 32 occurs when the teacher asks students to help him share pictures with each group. The teacher uses negative politeness strategy to ask the chairman to share the pictures. It can be seen there is act is mentioned and the teacher uses a yes-or-no question with the modal "can". The strategy occurs here is negative politeness strategy 2, namely question that replaces imperative statements into questions.

c. Off record

There is utterance of off record politeness strategy used by teacher in making requests as the following below.

Data 33

- Teacher : "You must have enough storage, but it's not too heavy, just 3MB or more. Just a little."
Teacher : "Have you finished writing it? Attention! In the application we are going to use later. *Hello?*"
Students : "Hi! Hi!"

Off record strategy is indirect form of language that provides less information as it rules out fewer potential outcomes or is otherwise inconsistent with what the speaker intends (Fridolini et al., 2021). The situation in data 33 is that the teacher is explaining the application they will use as a learning medium. The teacher states that the application takes up very little storage space on the student's phone. After confirming that students have successfully installed the application on their phones, the teacher turns to the whiteboard where she has written down examples of the features in the application. However, the students seem to be more focus on their phones when the teacher requests them to pay attention to the whiteboard. In the middle of the explanation, the teacher says "Hello" to get the students' attention. Then several students respond to the greeting and all students pay attention to the whiteboard. The teacher uses an off-record strategy where the speaker takes some pressure off the hearer. Instead of repeating the word "Attention!" or saying "Don't be noisy!" the teacher prefers to say "Hello." In this context, the word "Hello" is considered as an off-record strategy because the utterance is ambiguous.

There were twenty-six utterances which were categorized as bald on record strategy used by the teacher in making requests, four utterances were categorized as positive politeness, two utterances were negative politeness, and one utterance was off record.

The implication of politeness strategies in teaching learning process

The research findings found that there were implications of using politeness strategies in making request during teaching and learning process. This part was focused on the interaction when the teacher requested the students to fulfill the request. According to (Widiadnya et al., 2018), the implications of using the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) can be viewed from the cooperative principle theory by Grice (1975). There are four categories of maxims distinguished: maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevant, and maxim of manner. The implication of using Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in making request can be seen in the findings below.

Efficient communication

The first implication of using politeness strategies in making request in teaching learning process was an efficient communication. The following was how the use of bald in record strategy supports effective communication during learning and teaching process. It could be seen that the teacher's request did not violate the cooperative principle of Grice (1975) since the communication between the teacher and the students was relevant, not too much information, and fit the topic of conversation.

Data 15

- Teacher : "*Attention!* In this application, you will listen to a song, but there will be some blanks which you have to fill. For example is like this. *Look!* The dog is barking the house. So, *listen it carefully, ya!* What is the answer for this one? For example, *listen to me! Find out what is the answer!* There are some options, but you have to listen to the answer! 'The dog is barking outside the house.' *What is the answer?*"
- Students : "C"
- Teacher : "C? *What is C say?*"
- Students : "Outside."

Data 15 shows how effective communication could take place by using a bald on record. The teacher baldly requests students to pay attention and listen to what the teacher said by giving an instruction. As the result, when the teacher asks a question, students are able to provide answers according to the desire of the teacher.

The following was how the use of positive politeness strategy supports efficient communication in interactions during learning and teaching process.

Data 27

- Teacher : “Okay. So which group who will tell us the generic structure of procedure text?”
Student 1 : “This group, Miss!”
Student 2 : “Miss, this group, Miss! Ah, Miss!”
Teacher : “*This group first, ya. Okay, please tell us the generic structure.*”
Student 1 : “Goal, materials, steps.”
Teacher : “Right. What is goal?”
Student 1 : “Eh... the aim, Miss.”
Teacher : “Yes. So, what is the goal?”
Student 1 : “How to grow carrots.”

The positive politeness strategy in data 27 supports efficient communication by considering the students’ want as the hearers to teacher requests. Thus, when the teacher asks students to tell the generic structure of the procedure text, students are able to give the correct answer. Therefore, the use of politeness strategies supported the teaching learning process more effective.

Excerpt 1 R1

R1: “Iya, terutama saat memberikan instruksi...”

R1: “Yes, especially when giving instruction...”

The excerpt above was the answer when the researcher asked if the teacher used politeness strategies when giving instructions. It could be seen in R1 “*Yes, especially when giving instruction...*” that the teacher used politeness strategies in requesting by giving instruction. It supported that using any types of politeness strategies could make an efficient communication.

Cooperative interaction

The second implication of using politeness strategies in teaching learning process was a cooperative interaction between the teacher and the students. The teacher’s request in data 23 did not violate the Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle since the teacher requested the student to make them to be able to understand and relevant to the topic.

Data 23

- Teacher : “Do you think Joni is a boy or a girl?”
Students : “A girl.”
Students : “A boy.”
Teacher : “Joni, Joni. A boy, a girl?”
Students : “A girl.”
Teacher : “*Read the first sentence of the first paragraph!*”
Students : “Joni was a girl!”
Teacher : “Joni was a girl. If Joni spelled J-O-N-I, right? Not J-O-H-N-N-Y, Johnny, no. But Joni, a girl. Okay, let’s see.

Where's the lyric? I don't... Okay, 'Joni was a girl who lived next door', what does it means?"
Student 1 : "Jimmy was a neighbour, ehh... hehe..."

Data 23 as the example of cooperative interaction showed the teacher requested the students by giving them an instruction. As a result, the students immediately read the sentence in the paper. It showed how politeness strategy could make a cooperative interaction between the teacher and students.

Less Imposition

The implication of using politeness strategies in teaching learning process was reducing pressure. This strategy could decrease pressure or burden to the student by using negative politeness. If it was seen from the situation where the teacher was going to give the students some tasks to do, the teacher's request did not break the cooperative principle as there were clear orders that were relevant to the situation. There were two data consisted negative politeness used in the classroom.

Data 31

Teacher : "Okay, eh, *chairman, please help me to share these texts.*"
Student : "Yes, Miss. One for each group, Miss?"
Teacher : "Yes, one group, one text."

Data 32

Teacher : "Alright. *Chairman, can you help me to share the pictures with all of the groups?*"
Student : "One picture for each group, Miss?"
Teacher : "Yes."

The two data above show that reduce pressure could be implicated by mentioning the student's position in the class and stating a request with the word "please" and by asking a yes-or-no question. Less implication could calm students because they did not feel compulsion that burdens them.

To support that the use of politeness strategies could reduce students' burden, the following interview results can support this data.

Excerpt 8 R8

R8: *Perasaannya enak, karena kayak apa ya, kayak dihargai terus kayak 'oh ini Ibu meminta tolong' gitu, jadi kita harus ngelakuin apa yang Ibu itu kasih ke kita.*

R8: *I feel good, because I feel respected. And my thought was, "oh, the teacher asks me to help her", so we have to do what the teacher requests to us.*

The excerpt above was an answer to the question "What do you feel when the teacher uses the word 'please' in requesting you to do something?" It could be seen that

the student felt less imposition when the teacher requested her by using negative politeness strategies because she felt respected by the teacher as it was no pressure in the instruction.

According to the research findings there were politeness strategies that could be used to improve students' attitudes and to make the learning process went well. Data 27 showed bald on record strategies could make an efficient interaction by giving the requests directly and clear. The implication of bald on record strategy also showed in data 23 which created a cooperative interaction between the teacher and the students.

There was negative politeness strategy showed in data 31 and data 32 to reduce pressure for the students to make them relaxed when fulfilling the teacher's request. As the result there were three implications of using the politeness strategies by the teacher; there were effective communication, cooperative interaction, and less imposition. However, there was no one of off record strategy showed up in the implication of using politeness strategies in making request because off record strategy is contradicted with the cooperative principles by Grice (1975).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, there were two main points that could be concluded. First, there were four types of politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) occurred when the teacher making request: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Based on the findings, the most type of politeness strategies used by teacher in making request was bald on record strategy. Bald on record strategy was used because the message conveyed became clearer, unambiguous, and did not take a long time to be understood by students. While the least was off record because the utterances with this strategy were considered to be unclear, ambiguous, and not all students could interpret the meaning of the utterance. Second, the implication of the use of politeness strategies in making request during teaching learning process were efficient communication, cooperative interaction, and less imposition which had reviewed from the Grice (1975) cooperative principles.

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