**TEACHER’S VERBAL POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSROOM**

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**Abstract**

This research deals with the kinds of verbal politeness strategies which are used by the teachers in the classroom. The research employed qualitative research design. The participants of the research were two English teachers and the students of VIIA and VIIB of SMP DISAMAKAN ANGKASA Maros which were taken through purposive sampling. The data of this research was collected by classroom observation, video audio recording and interview.

**Keywords:** verbal politeness, politeness strategies, responses, classroom.

**INTRODUCTION**

Teaching and learning process which involves teacher and students in a formal situation are expected to teach the students to behave politely. The teachers are expected to give positive impact to the students’ behavior through their verbal and nonverbal communication. Unfortunately, based on the research conducted by Mulyono (2013) the students’ behavior recently failed more in negative than the positive one. Teenagers tend to be more aggressive than ever before. When we expect the students to talk and behave politely, at first, their teachers should talk and behave politely to the students.

Politeness theory stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) offers a useful framework for examining teacher politeness strategies. Bills (2000) explained that teachers’ professional role give the teachers enough power to evaluate students’ behaviors, constrain their freedom of actions, control resources, and give critical feedback, which then threats to students’ positive and negative face which given their legitimate power over students. The research investigated kinds of verbal politeness strategies which are used by the teacher’s in the classroom

LITERARUTE REVIEW

**Politeness**

There are many studies related to verbal politeness strategies. Senowarsito (2013), Zhang (2011), Shobibussiri (2011), and Mahmud (2010) has been conducted research about politeness. Based on the previous research findings, apparently, politeness is a very interesting topic to discuss. The cultural context hold important role on the politeness strategies used in communication. The politeness strategies are influenced based on the goal of the communicational process. While in the teaching and learning process, the politeness strategies are based on the awareness on the importance of verbal politeness to be used in the classroom. Teacher and students’ perception on social distance, the age difference, institutional setting, power, and the limitation of the linguistic ability of the students has contributed to the different choices of politeness strategies.

In defining politeness, Mahmud (2010) divided two level of speech that are normally used, polite speech and familiar speech. Generally, polite speech is used in social situations or formal context such as at work or offices between acquaintances or strangers. While the familiar speech is used in familiar conversations between good friends or family members.

The most well-known definition of politeness taken from Brown and Levinson (1987) where politeness defined as satisfying communicative and face-oriented ends, in a strictly formal system of rational practical reasoning. The theory of politeness strategies was developed in 1978 and expanded in 1987 by husband and wife researchers Stephen C. Levinson and Penelope Brown. It holds that people use various politeness strategies to protect the face of others when addressing them. Brown and Levinson (1987) then propose possible strategies that interlocutors can use to deal with face threatening acts as follows;

1. *Bald On-record politeness*: This strategy is used in situations where people know each other well or in a situation of urgency. In these instances maintaining face is not the first priority or main goal of a conversation. A person may shout, “Watch out” if they see someone is in danger or a mother may tell her son to “eat your peas” at supper. This strategy does not try to preserve face, but can be used to threaten it if taken out of context.
2. *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, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humor and optimism and making offers and promises.
3. *Negative Politeness*: This strategy tries to minimize threats to the audience’s negative face. An example of when negative politeness would be used is when the speaker requires something from the audience, but wants to maintain the audience’s right to refuse. This can be done by being indirect, using hedges or questions, minimizing imposition and apologizing.
4. *Off-record*: This strategy is more indirect. The speaker does not impose on the hearer. As a result, face is not directly threatened. This strategy often requires the hearer to interpret what the speaker is saying.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research investigated the types of verbal politeness strategies used by the teacher of SMP DISAMAKAN ANGKASA Maros. Therefore, qualitative method was used in this research. Hoepfl (1997) stated that phenomenological inquiry, or qualitative research, uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the following technique:

1. Observation and Video recording

For the observation and video recording data, the data collection was done using analytical model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) which are often referred to as interactive data analysis methods. Data analysis was begun by classroom observation, the researcher conducted one to four meetings observation or until the observation reached saturated data. Recording was used to record the classroom interaction between the teacher and the students. The observation and video recording which are used to collect the data was transcribed. After the transcribing process, the data then analyzed by interactive data analysis methods to identify the teachers’ verbal politeness and the students’ responses.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

Kinds of verbal politeness used by the teachers’.

The data was taken by the researcher during the teaching and learning process from the first meeting until the third meeting of the two teachers and two classes that had been observed. Kinds of verbal politeness strategies used by the teachers:

1. Bald on record strategy

Extract 1 : Starting the class

In this situation, the teacher asked the chairman to get the class ready.

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| --- |
| Extract 1  T : ***Siapkan nak!***  “Get the class ready child!”  S : attention please! S tand up please! Greeting to our teacher!  SS : Good morning mam.  T : Good morning students. |

Table 1. Data Display of Extract 1

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Teacher’s  Extract | Politeness  Strategies | Sentence Structure | Communication Purposes |
| “get the class ready child!” | Task oriented | * The sentence is using command expression. | The speaker used the sentence to ask the chairman to prepare the class. |

Analysis of extract 1

Extract 1 shows that the teacher asked the chairman to prepare the class by saying. “siapkan nak” which shows the teacher gave a task oriented command, to get the class ready, and has a close relationship with the students which shows on the use of “nak”.

Extract 2 : grouping the students

In this situation, the teacher divided the students into groups, set them into five groups and put them in different seats. The teacher also re-explained the lesson to the students.

|  |
| --- |
| T : *For Group 1 move there. semua bergerak kesana. Ok kelompok 1* ***cepat-cepat.. move… Go go go…kesana****. Kelompok 2 kesana.. and group two here..and group four here.. and for group five.. ok.. ok..* ***listen to me.. ayo perhatikan dulu bu guru semua****..ayo perhatikan dulu..tadi sudah kan dijelaskan yah tentang preposition. ada preposition in,on, under, in, beside juga..between juga.. you know between?*  “ for group 1 move there. Everybody moves there. Ok group 1, hurry up.. move… go go go.. over there. Group 2 go there.. and group two here.. and group four here.. and for group five.. ok..ok..listen to me.. all of you, pay attention to mam.. c’mon pay attention.. I have explained about preposition. There are preposition in, on, under, in, beside, between also. Do you know between?” |

Table 2. Data Display of Extract 2

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Teacher’s  Extract | Politeness  Strategies | Sentence Structure | Communication Purposes |
| *“cepat-cepat.. move… Go go go…kesana.*  *“listen to me.. ayo perhatikan dulu bu guru semua”* | Urgency | * The sentence is using command expression. | The speaker used the sentence to ask the students to move to the group and pay attention on teacher’s explanation |

Analysis of extract 2

In extract 2 the teacher divided the students into groups. The teacher command the students and show an urgency on the lesson by saying repetition “Ok kelompok 1 cepat-cepat.. move… Go go go…kesana” The next sentence also emphasized on asking for attention “listen to me.. ayo perhatikan dulu bu guru semua” which shows that the teacher asked the students to listen and pay attention to her.

1. Positive politeness strategy

This strategy tries to minimize the threat to the audience’s positive face. This can be done by attending to the audience’s needs, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humor and optimism and making offers and promises. As the following extracts:

Extract 3 : checking the assignments

In this situation, the teacher checked the student’s assignments and gave joke to the students’.

|  |
| --- |
| S : The chair is on the floor.  T : ***The chair is on the apa*? On the students?** <@haha@>  **“**the chair is on what? On the students?”  SS : <@haha@>  T : *apalagi nak?*  **“**What else son?”  S : The bag is on the table. The book is on table. |

**Table 3. Data Display of Extract 3**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s**  **Extract** | **Politeness**  **Strategies** | **Sentence Structure** | **Communication Purposes** |
| *The chair is on the apa? On the students?”* | Joke | * The sentence is using questioning. | The speaker used the sentence to deliver some humor or joke to the students. |

**Analysis of extract 3**

Extract 3 shows the kinds of verbal politeness strategies used by the first teacher. It was because the teacher used joke by saying “**The chair is on the apa? On the students?**” and laughed with the students. The students apparently enjoy the joke which was given by the teacher.

**Extract 4 : Practice**

In this situation, the teacher asked the students to collect the assignment which was given and gave compliment to the students.

|  |
| --- |
| T : ***You know we need 5 minutes to answer the questions. And you just need 2 minutes? Wow kalian keren sekali****. Ok saya kira sudah cukup yah. Silahkan dikumpul nak.*  “you know we need 5 minutes to answer the questions and you just need 2 minutes. Wow you are so cool. Ok I think it’s enough. Please collect [your assignment] son” |

**Table 4. Data Display of Extract 4**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s**  **Extract** | **Politeness Strategies** | **Sentence Structure** | **Communication Purposes** |
| *“You know we need 5 minutes to answer the questions. And you just need 2 minutes? Wow kalian keren sekali”* | Compliment | * The sentence is using confirmation and compliment expression. | The speaker used the sentence to confirm and compliment the students. |

**Analysis of extract 4**

Extract 4 shows that the teacher gave compliment to the students by saying “You know we need 5 minutes to answer the questions. And you just need 2 minutes? Wow kalian keren sekali**”.** The teacher shows an appreciation to the students by giving compliment.

1. **Negative politeness strategy**

This strategy tries to minimize threats to the audience’s negative face. An example of when negative politeness would be used is when the speaker requires something from the audience, but wants to maintain the audience’s right to refuse. This can be done by being indirect, using hedges or questions, minimizing imposition and apologizing. As the following extracts:

**Extract 5 : Beginning of the lesson**

In this situation, the teacher stated the purpose of the lesson and gave the first task to the students.

|  |
| --- |
| *T : Sit down. Ok students’ tujuan belajar kita hari ini adalah setelah mengikuti pelajaran nanti diharapkan kalian bisa menggunakan preposition.* ***Do you know preposition?***  “sit down. ok students’, the objectives of our lesson today is after the study, you are expected to be able to use preposition. Do you know preposition?”  *SS : ndag bu*  “no mam”  *T : Ok before you know preposition.. please observe..perhatikan..ini ibu taruh disini nih. Coba perhatikan. Boleh berdiri. Silahkan kalian datang kesitu.. ok two minutes*  “Ok. Before you know preposition.. please observe.. watch. I put this here. Try to observe. [you] may stand up. Have a closer look. Ok two minutes” |

**Table 5. Data Display of Extract 5**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s**  **Extract** | **Speech Style** | **Sentence Structure** | **Communication Purposes** |
| *“Do you know preposition?”* | Questioning | * Question. | The speaker used the sentence to ask the students about the lesson |

**Analysis of extract 5**

Extract 5 shows that the teacher try to introduce the new lesson to the students. The teacher used hedging or questions by saying “Do you know preposition?” to check for the students previous knowledge and to attract the students curiosity.

E**xtract 6 : Grouping**

In this situation, the teacher divided the students into groups and set the rules and assignment for the groups.

|  |
| --- |
| T : *“****Okay.. Ibu yang tentukan apa yang harus kalian jual****. For this one you are going to make..eh.. fruit advertisement (pointed the first line)… and you are vegetables. (pointed the second line). and you are for ehmm.. book (pointed the third line). and you are for bag. Tas.. And you are for..and you are for hmm bicycle, do you know bicycle?*  “okay. Mam will decide things you have to sell. For this one, you are going to make fruit advertisement. And you are vegetables, and you are book. And you are bag and you are for bicycle, do you know bicycle?” |

**Table 6. Data Display of Extract 6**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s**  **Extract** | **Politeness Strategies** | **Sentence Structure** | **Communication Purposes** |
| *“Okay.. Ibu yang tentukan apa yang harus kalian jual”* | Command | * The sentence is using command expression. | The speaker used the sentence to set the rules on doing the assignment. |

**Analysis of extract 6**

Extract 6 shows that the teacher tried to set the rules to the students. The teacher said “Okay.. Ibu yang tentukan apa yang harus kalian jual”. In here, the teacher put them in groups and gave them the assignments which is chosen by the teacher.

1. **Makassarese-Buginese Politeness strategy**

Beside those three strategies, the researcher found some specific politeness utterances which commonly used in Makassarese-Buginese society. As the following extracts:

Extract 7: Practice

In this situation, the teacher gathered the students who have finished their group assignments.

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| --- |
| ***T : Manami temanmu .. panggilmi temanmu nak. Bilang sudah waktunya..***  **“**where is your friend? Call them, son. Tell them time’s up”  *S : Panggil semuami Arlan*  “call all of them Arlan”  *T : Finished ok.. finished? Ok who is the member of group 1. Yang mana group 1? Up your hand.*  *“*Finished ok..finished? ok who is the member of group 1.. which one is group 1? Raise your hand” |

**Table 7. Data Display of Extract 7**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s**  **Extract** | **Politeness Strategies** | **Sentence Structure** | **Communication Purposes** |
| *“Manami temanmu .. panggilmi temanmu nak. Bilang sudah waktunya..”* | Buginese utterances | The sentence is using command expression. | The speaker used the sentence to ask the students to enter the classroom |

**Analysis of extract 7**

Extract 7 shows that the teacher asked the students to get back to the class by saying “Manami temanmu .. panggilmi temanmu nak. Bilang sudah waktunya..”The teacher used “manami” and “panggilmi” which expressed politeness utterances in Makassarese-Buginese society.

Extract 8 : Ending the lesson

In this situation, the teacher asked the students to collect the book and ended the lesson.

|  |
| --- |
| *S : Dikumpulki mam? Bukuta?*  “We collect [it], our book?”  *T2 :* ***Iye kumpulki semua yah. Sudah belmi****. Ok ee. I think that’s all for today and see you next week.*  “yes, please collect [them]. The bells are ringing. Ok ee.. I think that’s all for today and see you next week” |

**Table 8. Data Display of Extract 8**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher’s**  **Extract** | **Politeness Strategies** | **Sentence Structure** | **Communication Purposes** |
| *“Iye kumpulki semua yah. Sudah belmi”* | Command | * The sentence is using command expression. | The speaker used the sentence to ask the students to collect the assignment. |

**Analysis of extract 8**

Extract 8 shows that the teacher asked the students to collect the book by saying “Iye kumpulki semua yah. Sudah belmi.”. The teacher used “Iye”, “Kumpulki” and “belmi” which expressed Makassarese-Buginese politeness.

**DISCUSSION**

Kinds of Verbal Politeness Strategies Used by The Teachers’

Based on the findings there were three kinds of verbal politeness strategies used by the teachers in teaching and learning process which based on Brown and Levinson Theory (1987) and one specific strategies which use Makassarese-Buginese politeness strategy. Those kinds are presented as follows:

1. Bald on record strategy

According to Brown Levinson (1987) this kind of verbal politeness strategy involves in situations where people know each other well or in a situation of urgency in this case in a teaching and learning process as in extracts 1 and 2.

The teachers’ used bald on record politeness strategy as in extracts 2 the teachers’ showed the urgency on their utterances by constantly repeat the sentences which also shown the great efficiency on the utterances and the teacher’s need to be heard. Extracts 1 showed that the teacher used task oriented command to the students. Extracts 1 and 2 also show that the teachers and students have close relationship on the use of direct names instead of you.. The utterances which show urgency, great efficiency, task oriented command, direct names and direct questioning are categorized as bald on record strategy.

1. Positive Politeness Strategy

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) this kind of verbal politeness strategy tries to minimize the threat to the audience’s positive face. This can be done by attending to the audience’s needs, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humor and optimism and making offers and promises. As seen in extracts 3 and 4.

The teachers’ used positive politeness strategy as in extracts 3 where the teachers’ expressed some jokes on their utterances. Extract 4 show some compliments on the utterances to gain the students interest. The utterances which attending the audience’s needs, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, using humor and compliments are categorized as positive politeness strategy.

1. Negative Politeness Strategy

According to Brown Levinson (1981) this kind of verbal politeness strategy tries to minimize threats to the audience’s negative face. An example of when negative politeness would be used is when the speaker requires something from the audience, but wants to maintain the audience’s right to refuse. This can be done by being indirect, using hedges or questions, minimizing imposition and apologizing. As in extracts 5 and 6.

The teachers’ used negative politeness strategy as in extracts 5 the teachers’ used hedging or questions on their utterances. Extract 6 shows that the teacher tried to set the rules to the students. Extracts 6 shows that the teacher used apologetic expression. The utterances which using hedges or questions, using statement of general rules, be pessimistic and using apologetic expression are categorized as negative politeness strategy.

1. Makassarese-Buginese Politeness Strategy

The data of the research found that there are some specific utterances which are commonly used in Makassarese-Buginese society which is also used by the teachers in the classroom. As seen in extracts 7 and 8. The teacher used the Makassarese-Buginese utterances in extract 7 where the teacher used “manami” and “panggilmi” which expressed politeness utterances in Makassarese. In extract 26 the teacher used “nak” is a word which emphasizes in Buginese politeness to express a close relationship of the speaker to the hearer. In extract 8 the teacher used “Iye”, “Kumpulki” and “belmi” which expressed Makassarese-Buginese politeness.

Based on the data, the teacher used the Makassarese-Buginese words in the classroom interaction because they are common words for the teachers and students. Although the teachers used some Makassarese-Buginese words in the classroom, the level of politeness kept to be formal. It shows on the use of “mi”, “iye” and “ki” which shows respect in Makassarese-Buginese politeness.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher concluded that kinds of verbal politeness used by the teachers in the classroom consisted of four kinds of verbal politeness strategies, they are bald on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy and the specific one, Makassarese-Buginese politeness strategy. Bald on record politeness strategy was the most commonly used by teachers in the teaching and learning process. The data found that the relationship between the teachers and students are close enough which made the teacher get along very well with the students. Although, the teacher still used formal expression in the process. From the observation, when the teachers used the common polite expression, the students mostly didn’t respond to the expression which was given.

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