

GENDER-BASED TEACHER'S POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN BUILDING STUDENTS AND TEACHER INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT. Student-teacher interaction is often influenced by the teachers' actions and utterances. Therefore, it is important to establish a teacher's expression during the teaching and learning process. To maintain this interaction, teachers can apply certain expressions of politeness. This study provides the investigation of teachers' politeness strategies which help them to build the student-teacher interaction. Moreover, since there are different expressions of politeness among male and female teachers, this study also compares the power of politeness strategies in building student-teacher interaction based on the teachers' gender perspective. Through observing and identifying the teacher's utterances based on the politeness strategies' theory of Brown and Levinson, the use of positive politeness strategy is indicated as the strategy that builds most of the students' willingness to communicate. Student-teacher interaction is developed through positive politeness since this strategy keeps the students positive face by expressing the number of utterances that want to be listened to by the students. Also when investigating male and female teachers during the ELT process, the result shows that female teacher builds more interaction with the students since the female teacher tends to use the positive politeness strategy rather than the male teacher.

Keywords: *English language teaching; politeness strategy; teacher's utterances; Students' attitudes; student-teacher interaction; teachers' gender differences*

Introduction

The student-teacher social distance is often influenced by the way teachers interact with their students. Different utterances from a teacher will possibly provide different students' responses. Therefore in avoiding students' bad response, teachers use certain

strategies during the teaching and learning process with the purpose to build student-teacher interaction. Since it is important to establish a teacher's action and expression during the teaching and learning process, conducting certain expression of politeness is one of the ways which possibly help the teacher to maintain the student-teacher interaction.

The expression of politeness is commonly used by people from a variety of languages and cultures. This expression is mostly used to avoid face-threatening acts between the people (The speaker and hearer), specifically during the communication (Brown and Levinson 1987). It has been studied that expressing politeness in a conversation will positively increase the comfortable feeling between the speaker and the hearer (Mahmud 2019). As there are many types of expression of politeness, (Brown and Levinson 1987) summarized it into certain characteristics. Nowadays it is known as the politeness strategy. Based on (Aulia 2017), studying politeness strategy means the study of knowing the way people use certain languages while they are having communication with the purpose to build smooth and positive conversations.

The researchers bring the politeness strategy into the teaching and learning process since there is a lot of conversation conducted by the teacher and student. A previous study by (Jiang 2010) stated that like the other conversations, student-teacher conversation also has the possibility to threaten the hearer's face. In the context of the teaching process, teacher's utterances are the crucial part which particularly influences the students' responses. Once the students negatively respond to their teacher, the classroom situation will be awkward and less communicative. In a larger effect, there will be a gap in student-teacher interaction. Therefore, by asking the teachers to involve politeness strategy in their classroom, the researchers investigate the power of politeness strategy conducted by the teacher in building student-teacher interaction.

A previous study by (Liu Peng 2012) provides that politeness strategies frequently used by the teachers. They state that teacher's politeness strategy is important in the teaching process. The teachers conduct their class with the politeness strategy in a practical way. But the teacher mostly expresses politeness in a direct way. A same result from another study, (Jiang 2010) also found that expressing politeness strategy in a direct way is preferred by most

teachers. However, there are only limited statements which show that politeness strategy affects the student-teacher interaction.

In investigating the power of teacher's politeness strategy in building student-teacher interaction, the researchers conduct deeper research by looking also at the teacher's gender. Since the expression of politeness is basically depend on gender differences, involving the teacher's gender when using politeness strategy is also needed. (Makarova and Pourmohammadi 2019) showed that the expression of politeness in many cultures differs across the genders. For example, in New Zealand, women have been reported to give and receive more compliments than men. Also among the Americans and the British, men were demonstrated to swear much more than women (Coates 2004).

Certain issues related to the teachers' gender differences in teaching and learning process also found by (Rajesh Shah and Udgaonkar 2018). Focusing on the teacher's gender, a study found that the students specifically in a secondary school context, feel more comfortable when they are taught by a female rather than a male teacher. Conducting the study on students' perspective, students preferred females as they thought it was easy to interact with them. The students felt females are compassionate, hardworking, and have got a high pitched voice which is audible. Female teachers are looked at by the students as being more effective teachers because of their personality and attitude, where they are softer, understanding, and kind.

Therefore to fulfill the completeness of research in the topic of politeness strategy, not only investigating the power of teacher's politeness strategy in building student-teacher interaction. But moreover, the researchers also compare the male and female teachers when they use certain politeness strategies during the teaching and learning process. To make a brief explanation of the research objectives, the researchers build up two research questions as below.

- (1) How do politeness strategies build student-teacher interaction?
- (2) How are male and female teachers compared in the usage of politeness strategies in building student-teacher interaction?

Politeness

A few studies on politeness are provided by (Brown and Levinson 1987; Leech 1983). These researchers enlighten the foundation theory of politeness. Every participant involved in communication is gifted with a thing called the face. It is a description of self-picture among social relationships. Moreover, the face means honor, self-esteem, and public self-image. It is important to keep other people's face since we do not want our face to be threatened too. Therefore, politeness expressions are often used to avoid face-threatening act specifically during communication.

Based on the situation of conversation, the speaker probably threatens the hearer's face. The speaker is the person who says the utterances and the hearer is the person who listens to the speaker's utterances. When the hearers already threatened, it is indicated that they got Face Threatening Acts (FTA). These are the acts conducted by the speaker to threaten the hearer's face (consciously or unconsciously). It is an act where the speaker tends to speak in ways that runs contrary to the face wants of the hearer in an interaction either an act to threaten positive or negative face wants (Jane 1989). The clause "politeness strategies" means verbal message strategies that satisfy the hearer's face. It is a strategy used to avoid violation of the hearer's face. To prevent Face Threatening Act (FTA) or at least minimize the possibilities, speakers usually use politeness strategies.

According to many linguists, the importance of politeness strategies lies in maintaining a social order and see it as the precondition of human cooperation. (Lakoff and Ide 2005) stated that avoiding conflict is the purpose of using politeness strategies. These strategies actually had been learned since the children. For example when the mother asks children to greet their neighbor, or when the children have to thank somebody who give them sweetness. It seems to be important in sticking to these conventions, which had learned since human being exist. According to (Brown and Levinson 1987), there 4 strategies related to the politeness. Summing up Brown and levinsons' description of human politeness behavior, there are: bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off record strategy.

The first one is bald on record politeness strategy. This one is said as the most direct strategy. In the other words, bald on record means to the expression of speaker in the most

direct way. To minimize the effect of face threatening act, bald on record needs no effort from the part of the speaker's acts. This strategy uses the imperative form of utterances without any redress, and it is provided when there is minimal face threatening act. Using this strategy, it is likely to shock the persons to be addressed, embarrass them or make them feel a bit uncomfortable. However, it is found that people only use this to the hearer who close and comfortable to each other. For the examples are close friend and between family group.

The second is off record politeness strategy. Off record is the opposite of the bald on record strategy. This strategy means the speaker to perform certain expression. People who used off record tend to state it in unclear, ambiguous, and indirect way. Off record strategy minimizes the pressure that is on the speaker by avoiding the direct Face Threatening Act (FTA). Avoiding direct FTA means the hearer are free from any speaker's impositions. Explaining how off record strategy help the speaker avoiding FTA in through the most indirect way, these are several examples. Give hints "It is cold in here, the window still opened", be vague "Perhaps someone should have been more responsible", and be sarcastic "Yeah, he's a real rocket scientist."

Continuing the list, there is negative politeness strategy. This type is used to develop social distance among speaker and hearer. This strategy is actually avoidance-based strategy. Negative politeness suggest the speakers to respect the addressee of hearer's negative face and does not interfere with hearer's freedom of action. Negative face is indicated as the feeling of sad or smile-down face, while positive face is related to the feeling of happy or smile-up face. Several utterances characterized as negative politeness are forgiveness (You must forgive me but...), minimize imposition (I just want to ask you if I could use your pen?), and pluralize the person responsible (We forgot to tell you that you had to accomplish your work this week).

Fourth, there is positive politeness strategy. As the opposite of negative politeness strategy, sharing the feeling of familiarity with people is the key characteristic of positive politeness strategy. It can be indicated as the language of intimacy. Positive politeness has the purpose to rebuild any threatening act becoming a positive face. This strategy also treats the hearer to feel as the part of group such as friends or family. Positive politeness is conducted to minimize the social distance speaker and hearer by stating the expression of friendliness. A

characteristic of this strategy is the speaker tends to express the number of utterances that want to be listened by the hearer.

Student-Teacher Interaction

Teaching is an activity where interaction among student and teacher is needed. Moreover, interaction means the communication, among the classroom participants which flow continuously as responsive acts. (Pianta 2016) stated that in student-teacher interaction and activities, a productive teaching process can be described as teacher interacts with a group, a pair or an individual student; students interact with each other in groups, in pairs, as individuals or as a class; and students work with materials or aids and attempt the task once again individually, in groups and so on. Building the interaction between student and teacher during the teaching process can possibly be conducted especially by the teacher's talk. (Naimah 2016) showed certain types of teacher's talk during the teaching and learning. It is included the things below.

- Deals with feelings (accepting, discussing, or communicating feelings of students)
- Praises or encourages (praising, complimenting, telling students why, encouraging students to continue, or trying to give them confidence)
- Jokes (kidding, making puns, or attempting to be humorous)
- Uses ideas of students (clarifying, interpreting, or summarizing the ideas of students)
- Asks questions
- Give direction (giving directions, requests or commands that the students are expected to follow, or directing various drills)

Following Jiang Xiangqing's research, the interaction between student and teacher is mostly often only in certain teaching activities. (Jiang 2010) conclude that there are 4 teaching process categories where the teacher's talk influence student's attitude toward their teacher. Those four categories are instruction, motivation, evaluation, and classroom management section. In academic instruction, it covers all the teachers' utterances in directing students' learning activity such as guiding students' classroom presentation, responding to students'

question, and giving corrective feedback. Motivation conveys illocutionary acts aiming at provoking students in asking questions, giving opinion in discussion, creating feedback to the peers. Evaluation brings about two essential elements on how the teacher evaluate the students. In addition, the utterances of the teacher can encourage as well as discourage the students. While Classroom management covers disciplines of several situations caught in the instructions, directives (orders, requests, questions, and calls), procedural direction, and procedural directives

Method

This study was carried out at English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom of an undergraduate university in Indonesia. It deals with comparing male and female teachers when they use certain politeness strategies. Moreover, this study also investigate how politeness strategies used by male and female teacher build the interaction among student and teacher. The participants are the students and teacher who conducted English language teaching process in sixth semester. 30 students and 2 teachers (including one male and one female teacher) were involved in the study. The researchers follow qualitative research design and use observation to collect the data. The observation through recording is important in elaborating the discussion and finding the result. Moreover, the pragmatic analysis was applied in the research. In analyzing teacher's politeness strategy, the researchers focused on the teacher's utterances and student's attitude in the 4 teaching process categories based on Jiang Xiangqing's finding (Jiang 2010).

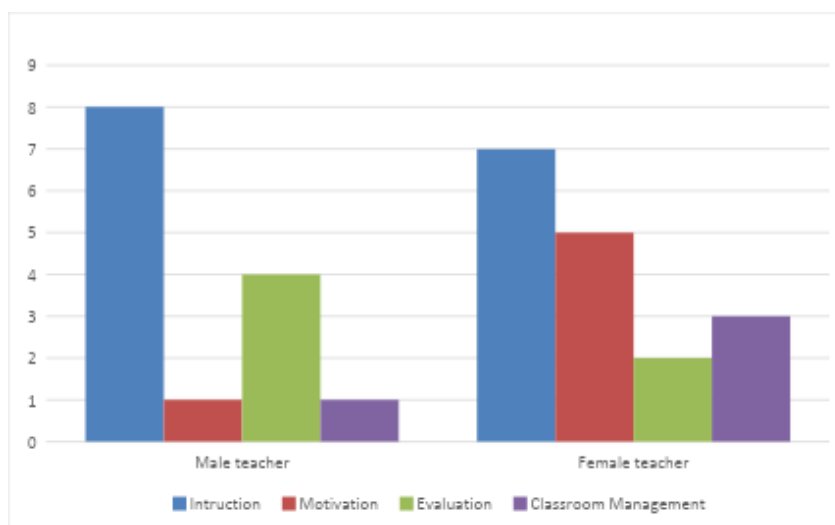
The way politeness strategy develop student-teacher interaction will be showed based on the students' attitude in responding the teacher's utterances. (Aulia 2017) stated the students tend to deliver the better attitude when the teacher use more polite utterances. In answering the first research question, the data is gained from the student's attitude when teacher teaches using politeness strategy. The observation of teaching process is based on the 4 categories above. Based on the students' attitude when responding the teacher, it will be found which one of the teacher's politeness strategy developed the interaction between teacher and

students. In the other hand, to gain the for the second research question, the researcher investigate all the teacher's utterances based on the 4 teaching process categories. Then it will be classified based on brown and levinson's politeness theory. To compare the use of politeness strategies, the teacher's utterances also divided into two sections based teacher genders..

Finding

This research enlighten that both male and female teachers use politeness strategies in their utterances during all the teaching sections. The figures below show the research finding related to male and female teachers' politeness strategies.

Figure 1. Teachers' politeness strategies during teaching and learning process

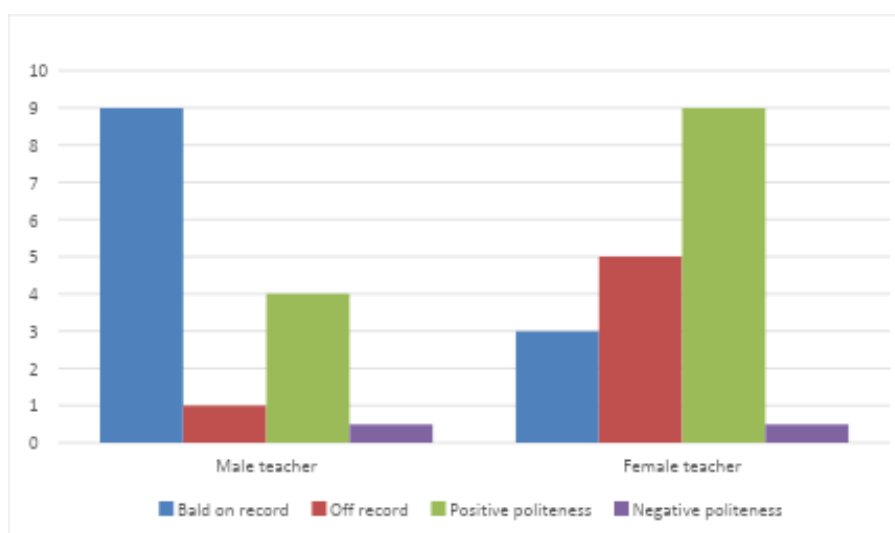


The researchers observe the four teaching process categories including instruction, motivation, evaluation, and classroom management sections. The finding show that both male and female teachers involved politeness strategy when communicating to the students. After all the collected data was investigated, the researchers found 31 teachers' utterances using politeness strategies. Comparing male and female teacher when using politeness strategies, both teachers tend to express the politeness in academic instruction sections. Academic instruction itself means the teacher's instruction in directing students learning activity or academic presentation. Moreover it also covers the way teacher responses to the students'

question and the way teacher delivers corrective feedback. For the example in the situation when the teacher attends the class and commence the lesson, teacher's comment in directing the students is indicated as academic instruction.

While politeness strategy is found almost on the academic instruction section, the variety of data related to utterances of politeness are also observed on the three other categories. According to the male teacher, expression of politeness is also found when he delivers the classroom evaluation. Since the male teacher does not focus on motivating and managing the classroom, only a limited utterances are indicated as politeness strategy on the motivation and classroom management sections. In the other hand, the female teacher often motivates the classroom. Therefore in motivation section, politeness strategies are found more on female teacher.

Figure 2. Male and female teachers' politeness strategies



On Figure 2. It provides the data related to the comparison of politeness strategy used among male and female teachers. The total data are quiet same, but it shows that during the teaching and learning process female teacher uses more politeness strategies rather than the male teacher. However, investigating deeper to the data, there is different preferences of using politeness strategy among male and female teachers. The researchers investigate teacher's utterances and categorize it into four types of politeness strategy based on the theory by

(Brown and Levinson 1987). These four politeness strategies are bald on record, off record, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategy.

According to the data on male teacher, it shows that bald on record is the most used strategy. It is then followed by positive politeness, and off record strategy. Comparing these to the female teacher, only limited utterances are found related to bald on record. Female teacher prefers to use positive politeness strategy. Almost all the female teacher's utterances uses positive politeness. When investigating the data, the researchers found a fact that there is no teachers used negative politeness strategy. Both the data on male and female teachers, negative politeness is counted as zero.

Discussion

This section provide the deeper explanation in order to answer the objectives of the research. Therefore following the research objectives, the discussion is divided as below

Politeness strategy in building student-teacher interaction

Politeness strategy build the interaction among teacher and student through the expressions of politeness. It happens when they communicate to each other during the classroom. The students tend to raise up the positive attitude toward the teacher when they are threatened more politely. A study by (Aulia 2017) show that students become more communicative when the teacher express certain utterances which prefer to be hear by students such as praising, joking, etc.

Choosing the expression based on the hearer expectation is categorized as one of the characteristic of positive politeness strategy. This strategy tend to share the feeling of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer. By using positive politeness in the context of English language teaching, teacher tries to build up the feeling of home in the classroom. Positive politeness has the purpose to rebuild any threatening act becoming a positive face. This strategy also treats the students to feel as the part of group such between friends or family. By choosing the utterances that want to be listened by the hearer, Positive politeness tries to establish a feeling of solidarity between the speaker and the hearer; or teacher and

student. (Brown and Levinson 1987) explain more related to sign of positive politeness strategies as attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods); exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer); intensify interest to hearer; seek agreement; joke; offer and promise; be optimistic; and give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

As the support of the previous study conducted by (Aulia 2017), the result of this study also prove that positive politeness strategy build students teacher interaction. Taking an example when the teacher say “you handsome boy in the backside read the text please” as the instruction using positive politeness. As the feedback, this student respond positively toward the teacher. He and his classmate laugh. After that the student replies by smiling and saying “yes mam, with my pleasure”. It is quite different when the teacher say “could you read the first paragraph?” as the instruction using bald on record. Although the students answer it by saying “yes sir”, it was observed that their attitude are quite passive. Another the example when the teacher motivate the students. In the data the teacher says “good morning students, such a beautiful day to begin the meeting.” and “happy to see you on this meeting”. Once the students compactly respond and smile toward the teacher. During the motivation section, student seriously listen up and put on happy face. It is indicated that positive interaction had been built during the classroom.

Male and female teachers' politeness strategy

The data of teachers' politeness strategies are taken from the teachers' utterances during the four categories of teaching process by (Jiang 2010). Since the Table 2. Provide a clear research finding related male and female teachers' politeness strategies, in this section the researchers elaborate the table into certain key paragraphs. In discussing the data, it is divided into two section based on the teacher's gender. Based on the data, the male teacher states 14 utterances using politeness strategy. Specifically there are 9 utterances using bald on record, 1 utterance using off record, and 4 utterances using positive politeness strategy. Although positive politeness is used certainly, the result shows that male teacher prefers to use bald on record rather than the three other strategies. When this strategy is conducted, teachers are indicated to be fast in finishing teaching process. Through the observation, the teaching

process does not over the time. It is even ended a little bit earlier. The teacher possibly want the classroom to finish early and does not spend the time. It is commonly known that the students do not like teacher's habit who often conduct teaching process over the appropriate time. Since the classroom is finished earlier, the teacher possibly pushes students to just listen up and focus during the teaching process without worrying about the teaching time. However, when student-teacher interactions are compared with the female teacher, the students are less communicative when they are taught by male teacher mostly using bald on record strategy.

In the other hand, data on the female teacher shows 17 utterances using politeness strategy. Specifically there are 3 utterances using bald on record, 5 utterances using off record, and 9 utterances using positive politeness strategy. The result shows that female teacher prefers to use positive politeness during the teaching and learning process. Supported by the previous discussion, positive politeness is the most appropriate strategy in building student-teacher interaction. Female teacher is investigated as build more interaction with her students. It is happen since the female teacher uses more positive politeness strategy rather than the male teacher who prefer bald on record strategy. The utterances of positive politeness strategy is studied as the utterances which build up the students' want to communicate more during the teaching and learning process.

Despite there are varieties of data on teachers' politeness strategy, there is a fact that both male and female teachers do not use negative politeness strategies. Both the data on male and female teachers, the usage of negative politeness is counted as zero. This strategy is actually avoidance-based strategy. Negative politeness suggest the speakers to respect the addressee of hearer's negative face and doesn't interfere with hearer's freedom of action (Brown and Levinson 1987). Negative politeness strategy isn't conducted by the teachers possibly because it is the opposite of positive politeness. This strategy does not realize the solidarity. Conducting negative politeness strategy automatically indicate that there possibly some social distance in student-teacher interaction. However, since the researchers do not conduct any interview, the reason why teachers avoid negative politeness strategy is still unclear. The deeper preparation and investigation are needed to fulfil the more complete research on the issues of teachers' politeness strategies.

Conclusion

Since the previous studies show that different gender often provide different expression, as the support, this study found it also happen in English language teaching context. In conclusion, when comparing the expression of politeness among male and female teachers, it proves that different gender teachers prefer different politeness strategies to be conducted during the teaching and learning process. The male teacher tends to use bald on record since the teacher does not like to talk too much. While the female teacher often uses positive politeness strategy since the teacher want to keep her students' positive face. Furthermore, connecting the politeness strategy to student-teacher classroom interaction, the result show that different politeness strategy influences the student attitude toward the teacher. Using the appropriate politeness strategy will affect the development of student-teacher interaction. This study found positive politeness strategy used by female teacher build up more students' willingness to communicate. As the effect, the student-teacher interaction in female teacher classroom are investigated as more communicative.

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