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## An Analysis of Positive Politeness Strategies to Promote Effective Interaction in The Classroom

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### Abstract

In the teaching learning process, a lively and friendly atmosphere in the classroom between teacher and students is the key to promote effective interaction. This study investigates an EFL classroom at the course in the terms of interaction between teacher and students to see how positive politeness strategies used by the teacher and the effect of positive politeness strategies in promoting effective interaction. One class of conversation class at the course was observed and recorded by the researcher. The recording were transcribed and analyzed by making use of related positive politeness strategies and effective interaction. Also, interview was done to get deeper data. The findings showed that positive politeness strategies existed in this class and it has created effective interaction between teacher and students and among the students.

**Keywords:** Effective Interaction, Politeness, Positive Politeness Strategies.

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### 1. Introduction

Every student has different ways in communicating in the classroom. A few students will speak bravely in the classroom, but at the same time there will be those who are shy to speak with others. Continuously communicate to students is the key that teachers should do which provides a lively and friendly atmosphere.

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. Politeness strategies are believed can promote effective interaction in the classroom.

Politeness has been defined by some experts which associates with making interaction among people. Lakoff (1976) defines politeness relate to the interaction where she divided it into two rules be clear and be polite. The second perspective comes from Grice (1975) which relates to maxims. According to him, in making conversation with people there are 4 maxims that should be considered. Another

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theory comes from Brown and Levinson's (1987), they define politeness relate to maintaining someone face which then divided into four politeness strategies: bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record indirect.

Positive politeness strategies are all the utterances that produced by the speaker (S) which has the function to make the hearer (H) feels happy, to maintain the hearer's positive face, and to fulfill what the hearer's wants and needs. Considering how the function and the benefit of positive politeness are , the writer intends to launch this research project to see what stratgies of positive politeness used by the teacher and how those strategies create effective interaction between teacher and students. The writer belives that the use of positive politeness strategy in the clasroom can promote effective interaction in the classroom.

## 2. Related Theories

### 2.1. Positive Politeness Theory

Among to the strategies introduced by Brown &Levinson(1987), the writer will particularly investigate only those of positive politeness strategies which has the function to safe the hearer's face, to give importance to the hearers' face, to minimize the potential threat of an FTA, and to make the relationship friendly. Positive politeness could be defined as an involvement-based approach made by the speaker for understanding, approving of, and admiring the positive image of the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) divide positive politeness into three mechanism, they are: claim common ground, convey that S and H are cooperative , and fulfill H's want (for some x),which then clasified into 15 strategies, they are:

*Strategy 1: Notice, attend to H ( his interest, wants, needs, goods ).* This strategy refers to any kind of utterances that produced by the Speaker which notice the hearer's wants, need, changing, and condition.

*Strategy 2: Exaggerate ( interest, approval, sympathy with H ).* The utterances produced by speaker with full of exaggeration like stressing of the words and intonation that show the speaker's intererst.

*Strategy 3: Intensify interest to H.* Pulling hearer into the conversation and giving the opportunities to be involved are the example of this strategy. this can be intensified by telling a good story or using question tag that can make the hearer interest to participate in the conversation.

*Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers.* By applying this strategy, speaker can put hearer in the group, for instance the use of jargon or slang, contraction and ellipsis.

*Strategy 5: Seek agreement.* It is used to stress emotional agreement and interest or surprise by saying the utterance that can satisfy the hearer's desire.

*Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement.* The utterances that used for pretending agreement or hiding disagreement in order to maintain hearer's positive face, for instance telling white lies.

*Strategy 7: Pressuppose/raise/assert common ground.* Any kind of utterances that can make the realationship is friendly. Talking for a while about unrelated topics like asking gossip or small talk are the examples of this strategy.

*Strategy 8: Joke.* Joking is a technique for making the hearer feels relaxed and making them having enjoyment.

*Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants.* Understanding hearer's blessing and wants by putting hearer to cooperate with speaker.

*Strategy 10: Offer, promise.* Using offers and promises to hearer in order to maintain positive face are some ways that the speaker can apply in this strategy.

*Strategy 11: Be optimistic.* This strategy refers to the want to show that the speaker and the hearer are cooperatively involved in the relative activity.

*Strategy 12:* Include both S and H in the activity. The use of we and let's are the example of this strategy where speaker put her/his self in the conversation which can shorten the distance.

*Strategy 13: Give ( or ask for ) reasons.* This strategy refers to hearer's reflexivity

*Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity.* By making dealment about what speaker and hearer should do in order to show the cooperation. For instance, I will give you high score if you can answer all these questions.

*Strategy 15: Give gifts to H ( goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).* This strategy refers to showing care, understanding, admiring, and listening to the hearer.

## 2.2. Effective Interaction

Communication as interaction in the classroom refers to the relationship which is build between students-teacher. A lively and friendly atmosphere are the keys to build a good relationship. When the students feel close and have the same emotion with the teacher, it will be a bridge to create a good relationship (Nielson & Lorber, para.1, 2009). In this paper, those relationship between teacher-students and students-teacher in the term of effective interaction will be investigated.

## 3. Methodology

This study used qualitative method and it was conducted at ELC Education, one of the English course in Makassar. The study focused on the students who were in the conversation class adult beginner level. To collect data, the writer did observation and recording conversations. The writer observed the class which was taught by Mr. Iyab , a 25 year-old teacher and 7 students who were in the age of 22-23 years old.

The writer would observe and record the teaching learning process in that class to understand and to analyze their concepts of positive politeness. A variety of conversations between teacher and students were conducted to obtain positive politeness expression in the class using tape recorder/hp. Participants were include all the number of the students and the teacher in the class.

## 4. Data Analysis

In this part of the paper, a number of relevant terms that shows how different of positive politeness strategies are used by teacher in communicating to the students in the classroom and how positive politeness strategies create effective interaction between teacher and students. Moreover, the writer found that there was one new

strategy that the teacher used in maintaining his students' positive face that is not include in Brown & Levinson' theory. Specifically, the detail data description can be seen as follows:

a. Giving students confidence to work without pressure

The choice of language used in communicating is one of the factor that can make students confidence in speaking. Some of the following extract below show that how positive politeness strategies used by the teacher can make them be more confidence in making conversation.

**Extract 1. Giving instruction (Recording 1 on 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2017)**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| T              | : Nah as I've told you, you are going to spell your complete name, and all the name of your friends. Nah sekarang persiapkan kertas dulu, saya tahu kau pasti butuh pulpen toh. ( <i>So now prepare your paper, I know you must need a pen</i> ). |
| S <sub>3</sub> | : Adaji sir eh, tapi kertasji hehhe. (I have sir, but just paper)   |
| SS             | : Hahaha ( laughing)  |
| T              | : Jadi (so), you don't have a pen?  |
| S <sub>3</sub> | : Yes sir hehehe  |

In the first extract above shows that the teacher gave the instruction to his students to prepare paper and he noticed one of his students did not have a pen. The expression "you must need a pen" was classified as a positive politeness strategy 1 which indicated that the teacher noticed what the student's want and need. It made the student who did not have a pen did not feel embarrassed to say that he did not have a pen. Instead of saying you don't have a pen that can make the student feel shy, the teacher prefered to say that expression that can maintain the student's face.

**Extract 2. Giving Instruction (Recording 1 on 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2017)**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| S <sub>3</sub> | : (Spelling name) cocokmi to sir? ( <i>is that true si?</i> )   |
| T              | : Yes, it's kind of nice, coba once more. Pokoknya ya guys tulis apa yang dia bilang. ( <i>yes, it's kind of nice, try once more. So just write what he said</i> ). |
| S <sub>3</sub> | : (Spelling) aih saya lupami lagi sir. ( <i>I forgot again sir</i> )  |
| T              | : Hahah lanjut. (next)  |
| S <sub>3</sub> | : (Spelling), nda ada pasti mengerti toh? ( <i>no body understand right</i> )?  |
| SS             | : Hahahah   |

The utterance like "yes its kind of nice, coba once more (try once more)" produced by the teacher is one of the example of positive politeness strategy 6, where the teacher said white lies to state opinion of disagree. It can be said that the teacher tried to maintain his student's positive face.

Two following extracts above showed that how the students speak confidence in responding their teacher instruction. In extract 2, it is showed that S<sub>3</sub> kept spelling the letter even though the first spelling was incorrect but he still kept spelling and spoke to his friends and teacher. He was still confident to continue even he has spelled wrong letter but the teacher did not say it directly but he used positive politeness strategy in giving disagreement where it can reduce the student's embarrass. Nielson and Lorber (2009) said that creating safe environments and giving students confidence to work are needed to be created by the teachers in order to build supportive relationship among them.

Besides, it was also supported by the statements of the students when they were interviewed by the researcher.

R	: Do you feel confidence talk in the class?
S <sub>6</sub>	: Yeah
R	: What makes you comfortable?
S <sub>6</sub>	: Because my friends are funny and I so comfort my teacher also so kind. He is like my friend not like my teacher. And I'm confident because the situation is fun and the teacher never make me shy walaupun saya biasa salah tapi dia tetap kasi pujian. Dia selalu bilang as long as your speaking partner understand, just talk.

The extract above was about the result of interview when the researcher asked about confidence talking in the class. According to interviewee, the student said that they felt confidence to talk in the class because the teacher helped them much to build confidence by giving motto to his students like as long as your speaking partner understand, just keep talking, so the students did not feel shy to talk even they made mistake.

b. Motivated them to participate more in classes especially in speaking

Positive politeness strategy can motivate the students in speaking. Students will feel motivated and stimulated to learn and actively collaborate with the teacher when the atmosphere in the classroom is save and supportive. Students motivation in participating in the class can be seen from the result of extract below.

### **Extract 3. Giving Instruction (*Recording 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2017*)**

S <sub>3</sub>	: I love japan too.
T	: I know what you love from japan. A boy like you must be like it. Do you know it guys?
Ss	: What sir?
S <sub>4</sub>	: What sir, tell us.
T	: YOU like naruto, iya kan.
Ss	: Hahahahaha
S <sub>3</sub>	: I want to go to india sir.

The utterance "do you know it guys?" and the word of "guys" are the example of positive politeness strategy 3 where the teacher tried to pull his students' interest by making statement that he was sure that his students would be interested to know it and positive politeness strategy 4 where changing students or children to guys to call the students is classified as a positive politeness strategy to shorten the distance between the teacher and students.

**Extract 4: Motivated Students (*Recording 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2017*)**

- T : Its good enough sharing about your reason, so my suggestion fo you all if you want to increase yur english you need to find a speaking partner, liatka saya bede to, carika istri yang anak bahasa inggris juga jadi biar di rumah pake bahasa inggriska juga. (*its good enough sharing about your reason, so my suggestion for you all if you want to increase your english you need to find a speaking partner, take me as example, I looked for a wife who is from English Department too so even at home I use English too*).
- Ss : Ok sir.
- S<sub>6</sub> : Ngapami sir ee pamer-pamer terus mentang-mentang sudahhami nikah. (*oh come on sir, just because you have married so you say it more and more*).

The extract above showed how the teacher tried to motivate and to maintain his students' positive face need by telling the story about him. This is a new startegy that the researcher found in this research. The utterence "*..take me as example, I find a wife who is from English Department too so even at home I use English too*" can be classified as a positive politeness strategy 16: telling personal experience to H where the teacher motivated his students by telling his personal experience and the purpose of the teacher said this was to maintain his students' positive face and it made the relationship became friendly which can be seen from the response of the students.

The two following examples above showed that how the relationship between teacher and students affects the quality of the students' motivation to speak in the classroom interaction. In the first extract showed that how the students motivated to give a response into the teacher question by showing their curiousity and produced question to his teacher. In the second extract showed how the students felt close to the teacher and made them gave the response about his teacher experience. As clearly mention before that teacher who demonstrates respect toward students, automatically win favor by having active learners in the classroom. During the observation, the writer saw that all of the students were active learners. They tried to respect and got involved in every conversation. For instance when the teacher talked about his life the students would give their comments enthusiasmsticly eventhough the teacher did not mention their name or asked them to talk, they would talk freely without hesitating. It is caused by the situation which is fun friendly that created by the teacher in term of the way he communicated to students.

Another interview with the teacher and students were also supported this as follow

R : So, what about the atmosphere of your class, how do you like it?  
 S<sub>4</sub> : I very like it because of that man, our teacher is so fun and I think he has "aura" to make us smile and to make a joke.  
 R : So, what do you feel when he makes joke in the class?  
 S<sub>4</sub> : I feel relax and optimistic to talk and also I feel motivate.  
 R : Motivate in what point?  
 S<sub>4</sub> : In speaking of course.

R : Oh so in communicating with your students, is there any strategies that you use?  
 T : I don't have special strategy but be honest I don't really like a quite class because to reach the purpose of conversation class we need to make a lot of interaction with students so sometimes that I think it is interested them, I sometimes make joke to make them relax and feel free to talk, I sometimes ask about their personal experience not because I am Kepo but it just to make getting closer with them so they can speak bravely without nervous. I try to put my self as their friend.

The result of two interviews above indicated that students got motivation in participating to talk in the class due to the teacher. In the first extract showed how the students felt relax, optimistic and felt motivated by the joke of teacher. In line with the result of interview from teacher. The teacher said "I sometimes make joke to make them relax and feel free to talk.

#### c. Making students feel comfortable and free to interact in the classroom

Caring for the students' need and strange and holding a supported relation with the students are the most important things that teacher should care. These can make students feel comfortable and free to interact in the classroom. If the teacher shows care about their students, it will make them free to interact in the class as a following extract based on the result of the observation.

#### **Extract 5. Giving Instruction (*Recording 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2017*)**

T : Ooo jadi kalian sudah saling mengerti yah, memang kalian kompak sekali. Nah coba ade your reason...saya lihat bajumu hari ini kayak kue lapis ya..(ooo so you have understood each other, you are very solid. So ade your reason.. i see your blouse today is like kue lapis...)  
 S<sub>3</sub> : Zebra cross  
 S<sub>6</sub> : We diamko mauka bicara. (*please be silent I want to talk*)  
 T : Nah dengar ade mau curhat. (*listen ade wants to share*)  
 Ss : Hahaha

The friendship existed between teacher and his students which can be seen from the example of conversation above. The topic that the teacher said like "saya lihat bajumu hari ini kayak kue lapis ya (I see your blouse today is like kue lapis)" can be classified as positive politeness strategy where it was appear as small talk and it caused the students talk freely about the topic.

**Extract 6. Giving Instruction (Recording 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2017)**

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| T              | : O my God seriously ade? It isn't your goal, is it?                         |
| S <sub>4</sub> | : Haa of course that the reason sir.   |
| S <sub>1</sub> | : One of the reason pastinya tawwa. ( <i>it must be one of the reason</i> ). |
| S <sub>6</sub> | : Bisa jadi sir. ( <i>it can be sir</i> ).                                   |
| T              | : O My God, ade do you have boy friend? Eh guys does she have?               |
| S <sub>3</sub> | : Yeah of course sir.  |
| S <sub>4</sub> | : Yang bicara itu sir tauwwa hahah. ( <i>the person who talk sir</i> ).      |
| Ss             | : Hahaha   |

From the extract above, it can be said that teacher tried applying positive politeness strategy 7 which is gossip by discussing general shared interests with students. By asking something personal about students' life such as "o My God, ade do you have boy friend? Eh guys does she have?" can be categorized as positive politeness strategy in term of gossip where it made the interaction among them become friendly.

In the two extracts above showed how the students felt comfortable to speak with their teacher. Both of the examples showed how the student did not feel doubting and shy to share about their problem in the class and they did not feel nervous even they talked about something personal, like relationship with someone. It indicates that both teacher and students have a good relationship, and it made them feel free to talk anything. When the students feel close and have the same emotion with the teacher, it will be a bridge to create a good relationship (Nielson & Lorber, para.1, 2009). This data also supported by the result of interview to the students.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| R              | : When your teacher communicate with you, how do you feel? do you enjoy it?                    |
| S <sub>5</sub> | : Saya enjoy.eeee dan saya merasa relax karena suasannya tidak terlalu tegang as a friend.     |
| R              | : Maksudnya dia friendly ? bersahabat begitu?  |
| S <sub>5</sub> | : Ya itu maksud saya   |
| R              | : So do you feel comfortable talking with him? Anda merasa nyaman berbicara dengan sir Shihab? |
| S <sub>5</sub> | : Yes karena like a friend.  |

R : Do you like his way in teaching in the classroom?  
 S<sub>1</sub> : Yes of course  
 R : What do you like most?  
 S<sub>1</sub> : He tidak terlalu tegang, sering selingannya bercanda maksudku materinya tidak kaku begitu, different dengan di sekolah jadi kita di sini yaaa sangat nyaman. (He is not really tight, he sometimes uses joke I mean his material not boring, different in the school so in here we feel comfort).

The result of interview above seen that the students prefer to talk more in the class because they felt comfort with the situation that the teacher created in the class. Based on their opinion, one of the factor that caused it is the teacher, he was so fun and he talked like a friend to his students and sometimes he put joke in his conversation.

d. Giving them the same chances in speaking

Giving the students the same chances in speaking is the main point to be success in promoting the effective interaction in the classroom. If the students feel that their teacher is respect to them, it will make them enthusiastic in speaking. As it can be seen from some extracts below:

**Extract 7. Opening the class (Recording 1 on 30<sup>rd</sup> of January 2017)**

T : Before we start our lesson, let's pray. So we start our lesson ya, nah Ummu could you please spell my name?  
 S<sub>1</sub> : Saya nda hapal nama lengkapta sir, nama panggilani. Biarmi? ( / don't know your complete name sir, is it ok?)  
 T : It's okey  
 S<sub>1</sub> : (Spelling) cocokmi toh sir? ( is that true sir?)  
 T : Yes, it is almost correct, mr.chandra can you?  
 S<sub>5</sub> : (Spelling)

In the extract above, positive politeness strategy 12 was used in the utterance of we and let's where the speaker put himself as a part of the conversation. By using those inclusive, teacher has made his students felt close to him which can be seen from their response with their enthusiastic in spelling the name. Those utterances have been used by him many times in the classroom during observation. This result is supported by the teacher statement in interview as follow:

R : Oh so in communicating with your students, is there any startegies that you use?

T : I don't have special strategy but be honest I don't really like a quite class because to reach the purpose of conversation class we need to make a lot of interaction with students so sometimes I choose unrelated topic that I think it is interested for them, I sometimes make joke to make them relax and feel free to talk, I sometimes ask about their personal experience not because I am Kepo but it just to make getting closer with them so they can speak bravely without nervous. I try to put my self as their friend.

R : Oo, so you put your self like their friends in the class?

T : Yeah, like a friend because many of my students say to me that you sir you are not like other teachers, the papuan students said that, they said other teachers just focus on their job, maps, lesson, book, so when they go in front of the students they just go, so that why I always put my self into the conversation to show that we are same position.

From the interview above, it can be known that teacher acted like a friend to his students as his strategy to get closer with them and to make them free to talk. It indicated that the teacher has given the sme chances to the students to participate in the conversation.

## 5. Conclusion

Positive politeness strategies existed in this class and it has made the atmosphere in the class become lively and friendly where there was a good communication between teacher and students and among the students. There were some positive politeness strategies that the teacher used like strategy 1, strategy 3, strategy 4, strategy 6, strategy 7,strategy 12, and There was a new stratgey of positive politeness that the writer found that the teacher often used in the classroom which is not include in Brown and Levinson strategies. This strategy is telling personal experiene to the H. The positive politeness strategies used by teacher are spontaneous expression without planning it before.

This research only focussess on positive politeness strategies introduced by Brown & Levinson ( 1987) while there are four kinds of politeness introduced by them. A further research with wider scope of the research is expected to explore more issues related to other kinds of politeness.

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