



The Host's Politeness Strategies in Ellen Degeneres Reality Talk Show

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Article Info

Article History:

Accepted 20 August 2017

Approved 15 December 2017

Published 15 March 2018

Keywords:

Politeness Strategies,
Host, Realization, Ellen
Show

Abstract

Language has a significant role in communication. As social being, almost everyday people use language to communicate with others such as communication over the telephone or a direct conversation. In conversation there was a certain rule which has to be learned to avoid misunderstanding. It was called politeness. Talk Show was television program that amuse people because of the conversation and joke in it. In this study the writer focused on Ellen Show inform the USA for the following reasons. First, it was one favorite Talk Show in USA. Second, there are few people talking about politeness. Politeness can make relationship better with the other. Hence, the writer examined it in the talk show. The last, related to the data, the writer found the contribution of impoliteness used by the host to ELT. There were two data collection methods used in this research: the video of the talkshow and the transcription of the interview. Based on the analysis, the researcher found kind of politeness strategies used by the host. There are four types of politeness strategies employed by Ellen Degeneres in the *Ellen Show* when having conversations with the guest star. They are bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategy. The politeness strategies contribute to make the relationship between people closer and make all learn how to appreciate others.

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p-ISSN 2087-0108

e-ISSN 2502-4566

INTRODUCTION

In daily life, language has a significant role in communication. As social being, almost everyday people use language to communicate with others such as communication over the telephone or a direct conversation. In conversation there is a certain rule which has to be learned to avoid misunderstanding. It is called politeness.

Goffman states that politeness, face is a representation of a self image that wants to be approved as a social attribute in order to show a good impression shared to others as in both religious and profession (1967, p.5). Thus, it can be concluded that politeness has an important role in communication because it is highly associated with someone's behaviour in interaction. So far, the use of polite behaviour is really needed in producing social interaction and it is an important thing that must be considered because a good behaviour will produce a good communication.

The politeness was not only for one group society, but also it was for everyone in all conditions that using language as their tools in daily conversation in order to make a good social interaction with other people in their life. Thomas (1995, p.150) stated that "politeness was a real-world goal (politeness interpreted as a real desire to be pleasant to others or as the underlying motivation for an individual's linguistic behavior)".

Using politeness made listeners could give a good response to speaker's question or request. According to Yule (1996, p.60), politeness was showing awareness of another person's face; it was related to social distance or closeness. Politeness referred to the emotional and social sense of self that everyone else to recognize. In this case, politeness was really needed to build a good relationship and to have a good social interaction with other people. In other words, politeness was the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward another.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p.62) members of a given society treat face, not as norms or values which members of that society subscribe, but as basic wants which every member of a society knows every other member desires, and which in general are in the interests of every member to partially satisfy. They also admit that face can be, and routinely is, ignored in cases of urgent co-operation, in the interests of efficiency and in cases of social breakdown (1987, p.62). Furthermore, as Thomas points out face is, 'damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others' (Thomas 1995, p.169).

Within their approach, Brown and Levinson, like Leech, suggest that certain illocutionary acts inherently threaten either aspect of the face of another person (1987, p.60). In their terminology, such acts are called 'Face Threatening Acts', or FTAs. They propose four superstrategies for mitigating FTAs and for the next we call politeness strategies. It must be noted at this point that Brown and Levinson's approach is clearly a theory interested in the creation and maintenance of social harmony and social cooperation.

Nowadays, politeness we can find in programs or television. There are a lot of programs on television ranging of music show, soap opera until talk-variety show. Talk-variety show offers fresh air to people who are busy working all day long. One of the talk-variety shows is *Ellen Degeneres Show* in *Lifetime TV*. *Ellen Degeneres Show* packed with a relaxed, light, playful, funny, and not focusing on sensation, gossip, or the meltdown of the guest star. It becomes more special and different from other talk-variety show because *Ellen Degeneres Show* is the one talk-variety show in America hosted by a comedian; Ellen DeGeneres. Moreover, *Ellen Degeneres Show* also discusses current issues and hard news with the guest stars in a fun way.

Ellen DeGeneres herself is a famous comedian in America. She is able to make *Ellen Degeneres Show* different from other talk-variety show because his ability in comedy. Ellen able to deliver monologues which proved amusing and entertaining. Language used in *Ellen*

Degeneres Show is also perfectly suitable for Ellen's character that's playful, funny, naughty, and forthright. For some people (viewers), Ellen's speaking style was considered impolite because it was too straightforward and frontal. She does not hesitate to use politeness strategies when interacting with guest stars for example insulting, mocking, using taboo language etc, in order to reflect and foster social intimacy. Thus, this paper aims to discover the politeness strategies performed by Ellen DeGeneres and to know the responses of the guest stars to politeness. This paper is also to find the contribution of politeness strategies to English Language Teaching (ELT). The researcher applying Brown and Levinson's politeness theory.

The previous studies will be summarized and written in this article. It is chosen based on the similarity of research area and taken from different countries.

The First Previous Study conducted by Lidiawati Siadari entitled *Politeness Strategies of the Host's Utterance in Hitam Putih Talk Show, September 13th, 2013*. In this research, she uses the Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson, 1978) social factors theory (Holmes, 1992) and also Speech Act Theory (Yule, 1996). The aims of this research are to explain the kind of Politeness Strategies used by the host of *Hitam Putih*, to figure out the most frequent use of Politeness Strategies by the host, and to explain the reason of using Politeness Strategies. The result of this research is that the writer finds 2 utterances of Bald on Record, 3 utterances of Negative Politeness strategy, 11 utterances of Positive Politeness Strategy, and 1 utterance of Off Record strategy. The most frequent use strategy is Positive Politeness. The reason for using Bald on Record is that S wants to perform FTA with maximum efficiency and emphasizes his intention as clear as possible. The reason for using Negative Politeness is that S concerns with people's negative face. The reason for choosing Positive Politeness strategy is that S recognizes that H has desire to be appreciated and respected in order to make H relax in the conversation and show their

solidarity. Then, the reason for using Off Record strategy is that S wants to do FTA, but he wants to avoid the responsibility of doing it.

Moreover, "A Study into Politeness Strategies and Politeness Markers in Advertisements as Persuasive Tools" by Reza Pishghadam and Safoora Navari (2012) from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran, is also used as the reference of this research. This study aims at comparing and contrasting the linguistic politeness strategies which are employed by Iranian and English advertisers in their print advertisements. It employs the theory of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson.

The third research conducted by I Made Suwartama (2017) entitled "*The socio-cultural constraints in the implementation of politeness strategies in the interactions among english language education students*," this study aimed to investigate socio-cultural constraints in the implementation of politeness strategies in the interaction among English Graduate Students. The findings showed the cultural aspect constraints appeared more frequently than social aspect constraints. Positive politeness strategies appeared more frequently than negative politeness strategies.

The last research focusing on politeness was conducted by Intan Permana Sukma (2009) entitled "Politeness Strategy in Intercultural Communication Reflected in Edward Zwick's *The Last Samurai*." It has three findings: 1) The characters in *The Last Samurai* applied four strategies of politeness when they have intercultural communication in which there are different tendencies of each cultures— Americans tend to use negative politeness, Japanese and British people tend to use positive politeness; 2) Among the six politeness maxims underlying those politeness strategies, approbation maxim is mostly used by all cultures involved in; 3) The most frequently emerged socio-cultural factors influencing the preference of each character of *The Last Samurai* in applying certain politeness strategy in intercultural communication are divided into two main factors— social factors (social elements and social dimension) and

cultural factors (cultural elements and cultural dimension).

The present study is entitled *The Host's Politeness Strategies in Ellen Degeneres Reality Talk Show and its Contribution to ELT*. The aims of this research are to describe the types of politeness strategies addressed to the host in *Ellen Degeneres Talk Show*, to explain the realizations of the impoliteness strategies addressed to the host in *Ellen Degeneres Talk Show*, and to describe the guest star responses to the impoliteness strategies addressed to him in *Ellen Degeneres Talk Show*.

There are differences between the previous research and the present study. First, the two previous research describe the types of impoliteness strategies. Meanwhile, the researcher does not only try to describe the types of impoliteness strategies but also try to describe the realizations of the impoliteness strategies and the responses to the impoliteness strategies. Third, the previous research examined politeness strategies while the present study analyzed the contribution of politeness strategies to ELT.

METHODS

This study is carried out with some assumptions. The first is there are politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson which are performed by the host in the talk show. The second assumption was there would be the realization of politeness strategies used by the host to get the responses of the guest. The last assumption are there the responses by the guest star to Politeness and there are the contribution to ELT. The subject of this study is conversation between the host and the guest in *Ellen Degeneres Talkshow*. And for the object of the study, the writer take the hosts' utterances. The data taken from the transcript that has the writer make.

Research is a kind of complex process done by the researcher from the beginning of the research up to the end. By doing the study, the writer give him role as data analyzer. The writer try to analyze and describe politeness strategies used by Ellen In her talkshow. The kinds of

politeness are implemented through the host's utterances in the Talkshow. And then the writer give his description about the guest's reaction of those utterances. The last is the writer will look for the contribution of Politeness Strategies to ELT.

The data will take from the episodes *Ellen Degeneres Talkshow*. The data are in form of words, phrase, and sentences taken from the Talkshow. They are also in form of description and identification of utterances in the conversation among the character that used kinds of politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson Theory. By analysing the characters' utterances, the writer tried to find the effect of politeness to the addressee.

The unit of analysis is the politeness utterances used in the conversation in *Ellen Show*. The conversation is observed to find out the politeness strategies. Then, the reason for employing politeness strategies are explained. Not only the strategies but also the responses of politeness and the contribution to ELT explained in this research.

Collecting the data is the significant step in this study. In collecting the data the writer did not need a lot of instruments, because the writer did his research without involving students as the objects of the study. Therefore, he just needed the utterances that have transcript before as the object of the study. The technique of gathering the data applied in this study is by using several steps:

(1) Watch the video

The first step the writer did in collecting the data was watching the video that has taken from youtube in several times in order to understand the content.

(2) Transcript the conversation

While watch the video the writer make transcript of the conversation because the object of the study is the utterances of the host.

This is a qualitative research data in the form of utterances. In this study, the writer describes the use of politeness in the character, which are found. After the data are found, the writer analyzes the data based on politeness Strategies based on Brown and Levinson'

theories. Hence, it is elaborated below the steps of analyzing data.

(1) Identifying the data

After watch the video and make the transcript several times, the writer made some notes on the pages that might contain the required data (utterances, sentences, and lines containing politeness strategies). The notes were in the form of underlining or bracketing the sentences or utterances in the utterances.

(2) Classifying

After the writer get all the data from the transcript, he then classified the data.

Table 1. Draft of Politeness Strategies used by the host.

NO	UTTERANCES	POLITENESS STRATEGIES			
		BR	PP	NP	OR

Note :

- BR : Bald on Record
- PP : Positive politeness
- NP : Negative politeness
- OR : Off Record

(3) Interpreting:

In here the writer interpreting the data contained Politeness Strategies.

(4) Conclusion and Suggestion

The ultimate step in this study is drawing conclusion and suggestion. Thewriter make it from the result of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Politeness is one of the central concepts in pragmatics. Politeness strategy includes someone’s basic knowledge about norms and beliefs he/she learns from his/her culture. Different cultures have different ways of expressing consideration for other. Thus, every culture has its own ways or strategies of showing politeness to others.

In this research, the researcher also applies her own perspective and basic knowledge to judge the politeness strategies employed by the host’s Ellen Show when having

conversation with the gueststar and the way those strategies are realized and also the responses of the gueststar to the host’s politeness. This research attempts to describe those strategies and in the findings section, the researcher shows the results of the data analysis. Then the frequency of occurrence of those strategies is described in Table 2 Politeness Strategies and its Realization Employed by the Host in Ellen Show

Table 2. Politeness Strategies and its Realization Employed by the Host in Ellen

No	Politeness Strategy	The Realization	Frequency
1.	Bald-on Record	Showing Disagreement	7
		Giving Suggestion/Advice	4
		Requesting	5
		Warning/Threatening	7
		Using Imperative Form	1
Sub-total			24
2.	Positive Politeness	Claiming Common Ground	34
		Conveying that S & H are Cooperators	18
		Fulfilling H’s wants for someX	5
Sub-total			57
3.	Negative Politeness	Being Indirect	0
		Not Presuming/Assuming	5
		Not Coercing H	3
		Communicating S’s want to not Impinge on H	3
		Redressing other wants of H’s 2	3
Sub-total			14

4	Off-Record	Inviting	8
		Conversational Implicature	
		Being Vague/Ambiguous	4
Sub-total		12	
TOTAL		107	

The table presents the occurrences of politeness strategies and the way those strategies are realized by *Ellen Degeneres* as the host in Ellen Show. From the table, there are 107 occurrences of politeness in the dialogues performed the host. Among the four strategies, positive politeness strategy has the most occurrences. It shows that the host prefer employing positive politeness strategy to other strategies in their utterances.

As it is seen, positive politeness is applied in as many as 57 times by the host. It is followed by bald-on-record strategy which is applied in as many as 24 times and negative politeness strategy which is applied in as many as 14 times out of 107. On the other hand, Off-record strategy is the least strategy applied by the host. It occurs 10 times out of 107. Further, as it is illustrated in the previous explanation that the positive politeness is the most applied by the host, the occurrences of its sub-strategies also have the largest rank. Claiming common ground, which is the sub-strategy of positive politeness, is in the first position with 34 times out of 107 total occurrences. The second place is still the sub-strategy of positive politeness. Conveying that S & H are Cooperators occurs 18 times out of the whole occurrences.

As the next level, there is the sub-strategy of Bald-on-record, Warning/ Threatening, with 7 occurrences out of 104 total data. They are followed by the other sub-strategies which are applied in less-than 10 times. There are Inviting Conversational Implicature, the sub-strategy of Off record, which has 8 times of occurrence; Using Imperative Form, the sub-strategy of Bald-on-record, which occurs 1 time; and, Showing Disagreement, the sub-strategy of Bald-

on-record as well, which appears 7 times occurrences out of 107.

Then, Giving Suggestion and Requesting (the sub-strategies of Bald-on-record), Fulfilling H's want for some X (the sub-strategy of positive politeness), Not Coercing H and Communicating S's want to not impinge on H (the sub-strategies of negative politeness), and Being Vague/Ambiguous have the same occurrences. They are applied as many as 4 times from the whole occurrences. And the last are the least occurrences. They are Being Indirect, Not Presuming/Assuming, and Redressing other wants of H's in which all of them are the sub-strategies of negative politeness. Not Presuming/Assuming occurs 3 times out of 107 total occurrences. While Being Indirect and Redressing other wants of H's have only 3 occurrences from the whole data.

Bald-on Record

Bald-on record strategy is commonly found in people who know each other very well and very comfortable in their environment, such as between close friends and families. In Ellen show almost all the guest stars are entertainer and the host very know well all the guest stars.

This type of strategy is performed directly, clearly and unambiguously. The dialogue in extract 1 contains the example of this strategy employed by The host Ellen.

Extract 1

- Ellen : *Why don't you move here, and then you'd have a bigger place? Do you like it here?*
- Amy Schumer : *But-[sighs] I mean, I don't fit in here- just straight up body type. Like, in L.A., my arms register as legs. They're just like- [laughter] [laughter] They're like, "Why is that octopus on Sunset?" "Is that-" [laughter] It's not- it's not for me out here*

The situation happens in when the guest star Amy Schumer get sit down. Ellen want to know deeply about Amy Schumer but she sit very far from Ellen. So Ellen requesting to Amy to get more close to her. The requesting utterance one kind of Bold of record. For that reason, She performs his FTA directly and clearly when Amy didn't sit next Ellen.

In the next example, Ellen expresses about her disagreement. The dialogue happens between Amy Schumer and her. Ellen comes to her to ask for move beside her. But Amy refuse the suggestion from Ellen and she answer with out of conversation. Amy said "But-[sighs] I mean, I don't fit in here- just straight up body type. Like, in L.A., my arms register as legs. They're just like- [laughter] [laughter] They're like, "Why is that octopus on Sunset?" "Is that-" [laughter] It's not- it's not for me out here" Amy said that she not far from Ellen.. However, Ellen disagrees with Amy statement. She does not attempt to soften the threat to his face. Then, Ellen clearly conveys her disagreement by saying "No" which is in contrast with Simon's "it's not for me out here." This is illustrated in extract 2.

Extract 2

Ellen : Why don't you move here,
DeGeneres and then you'd have a bigger place? Do you like it here?

Amy Schumer : But-[sighs] I mean, I don't fit in here- just straight up body type. Like, in L.A., my arms register as legs. They're just like-[laughter] [laughter] They're like, "Why is that octopus on Sunset?" "Is that-" [laughter] It's not- it's not for me out here

Ellen : No?
DeGeneres

Positive Politeness

Like bald-on record strategy, positive politeness is also usually seen in the groups of people in which they, in social situation, know

each other fairly well. It tends to show solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. Positive politeness is the most frequent type among all strategies. It means that Ellen prefer to apply positive politeness when having communication with the guest stars.

The preference in applying this strategy is closely related to the relationship among The host and guest stars. As it is seen in *Ellen Show* which happens in the context of family discourse, The host and the guest stars have close and friendly relationship.

The example is shown in the dialogue in extract 3 the utterance between Ellen and Katty Perry. It happen when Ellen call the Ketty to come to her studio.

Extract 3

Ellen : Alright, after having the biggest song of the summer, it was no surprise that our next guest CD debuted at number 1, she was nominated for two VMA's tonight, please welcome the lovely Katy Perry.
DeGeneres

Ellen : Hi, Katy Perry.
Katy Perry : I feel like this is one of those drunken tattoo type dresses that you will regret

In this dialogue, she tries to minimize the distance between Katty Perry and her. She expresses her solid attention to Katty's need of calling her name. He wants to ask him for something. And she knows that he wants his call is responded by her. So to show her deep attention to him, she gives him good understanding by say "Lovely" . It means that she likes a lot to Katty.

Negative Politeness

Negative politeness focuses on minimizing the imposition to the hearer. Someone may use several ways in applying negative politeness to the others, such as being

pessimistic and apologizing. Like what Ellen applies in the excerpt in extract 4. This dialogue happens between Ellen and David. Ellen begins to ask to her guest star about the factual condition of David.

Ellen ask about David's tour. But Ellen didn't need David's answer and Ellen ask another topic. She ask about the David's Family but she pessimistic about the answer because David has more activity. Ellen tries to minimize the imposition to David by showing his pessimism in her utterance "*I want to talk about you and your beautiful wife, because now you're in a new campaign for...*," in which the phrase *because now you're* " illustrates her pessimism. Then she also asks for apology to David because her question. "*I don't want to say the wrong...*" in this utterance Ellen asks for apology.

Extract 4

Ellen : Yeah, how's the tour going?
 DeGeneres : But no, first I want to *talk about you and your beautiful wife, because now you're in a new campaign for...*
 Ellen : *I don't want to say the wrong...who are you doing this for?*

Off-Record

Off Record is simply described as indirect utterance. Based on Brown and Levinson (1978:211-227), off record might violate the whole maxim of Grice (1975). There are two ways to represent off record strategy. The first is to invite conversational implicature. The second is to be vague or ambiguous.

The result of this research presents that off-record strategy has the lowest frequency. It happens since, in this research, the collected data are only the utterances employed by the host. Off-record strategy employs indirect uses of language which has more than one interpretation. It signifies that when the speaker tends to use this type of strategy, he/she can do it indirectly and leaves up his/her utterance to how the hearer decides to interpret it.

And having conversation will be much better if the host apply clear and unambiguous way in delivering their intention. It makes the guest star easily understand what they want to convey. So, the miscommunication of their conversation will be avoided.

lthough it is the least strategy which appears, the host employ it in some of their dialogues with the the guest star. It is employed as many as 12 times out of the whole data.

Extract 5

Ellen : *You go too far, Ken. You must not explain more...*
 DeGeneres :
 Kanye West : "*I didn't.*"
 Ellen : Well, it's not daytime television anymore. We're going to take a break and we are going to come back, we're going to play 5 Second Rule, which should be very fun with Kanye.

The phenomenon in extract 5. Ellen asks kanye many things to clarify who Kim is. She feels cornered by his statments. Then she asks him to stop tell indirectly. She gives a hint to Kanye by saying *you go too far* which implies that he does not want to be hear again. He prefers to say *you go too far* instead of *don't explain again!* It means that he wants to get off the pressure to Kanye. However, she also emphasizes his hint by saying his real intention.

The interaction in the classroom is still largely dominated by the teacher such as giving instruction, giving explanation, showing appreciation, encouraging, motivating, and answering students' questions. The students performed mainly in responding to teacher's instruction, questions and encouragement. Because of the limitation of the linguistic ability, the students tend to use some interpersonal function markers, such as cooperation, agreement, disagreement, response, reaction, and confirmation, and use non-verbal expressions. The linguistic expressions in verbal interaction of both teachers and students are addressing, thanking, apologizing, encouraging,

and leave-taking. In the classroom interaction, the social distance created by age difference and institutional setting is still strong.

The politeness strategies employed are positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald on-record strategies. The positive politeness strategy is performed mainly by reducing the threat of face using group identity markers and expressions of sympathy, showing respect and establishing a close relationship, and friendly and enthusiastic facial expressions. To reduce power, the teacherstry to give weight to the students' participation on giving opinions, feelings and ideas. They also use indirect speech acts and solidarity makers to soften the illocutionary force of their speech acts. The negative politeness strategies are applied in making imperative expressions, softening the direct expressions with the conventionally polite expression 'please', lessening the imposition and the power of the message, using the affirmative form to satisfy a request, and creating an impression of options. These strategies include hedging and presenting disagreements as opinions. While bald on record strategy is mainly employed by the teachers in giving commands and instructions, and making requests.

This strategy is applied by using direct speech acts, not trying to minimize the threat to the students' face, and imposing and creating pressure on the students. The results of the study should be an indispensable tool to examine politeness, which is an important aspect of student character building in classroom interaction. Politeness is an initial step to develop positive personal and social attitudes. Through discreet use of politeness, one can soften the language behaviour in any speech events in turn.

In fact, in ELT classrooms, the English language becomes an object of learning, rather than a tool of communication during the lesson. It focuses on its linguistic and semantic features rather than on pragmatics. Teacher never conveys pragmatics issues of language use to his/her students' attention. In other words, it is necessary to think again the nature of interaction

in ELT classrooms. It is suggested that further studies examine and dwell on the opportunities to learn pragmatic skills together with language skills, and the opportunities to develop ELT pragmatic ability in language classrooms and student's pragmatic awareness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the results of the research can be concluded as follows. There are four types of politeness strategies employed by Ellen Degeneres in *Ellen Show* when having conversations with the guest star. They are bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategy. Since the speaker claims 'common ground' with the hearer by indicating that both of them belong to the same set of persons, who share specific wants including goals and values, claiming common ground has the highest frequency among the fifteen sub-strategies. It means that *Ellen Show* have preferences in the need of sharing common ground.

There are two main reasons for choosing the strategies. Firstly, the host considers the payoffs of each strategy such as avoiding misunderstanding by using bald on record, showing interest, appreciation, and approval by using Positive politeness, minimizing the imposition by using negative politeness, and seems not to force the guest by using off record. However, the host only uses off record in interviewing entertainer because they have many shared knowledge and same context. Secondly, the host considers the circumstance among him and the guests in the talk show. Then, he can estimate the weightiness of the FTA given by seeing the distance, power and ranking of imposition so that he can choose the most appropriate strategy to use. Then, he uses more positive politeness to the entertainer due to their low distance.

On the other hand, he uses some negative politeness strategies to indicate his respect and reluctance due to their great distance.

SUGGESTION

This study can be a reference of politeness strategies in the interaction among the adults and the children. However, the adults must be having some factors which influence them in choosing the preferred strategies. Those factors lead to the much deeper analysis concerned with the functions of applying the preferred strategies. Thus, the researcher suggests the students of linguistics to figure out these factors and functions in order to achieve much better understanding in the realizations of those politeness strategies.

To the readers in general, after they understand about the strategies, the researcher hopes that they can apply those strategies in an appropriate way and appropriate context when having interaction with others. However, this study only presents a little part of applying politeness in human's daily life reflected in the talk show. Thus, the researcher also recommends the readers to find out some more important values of politeness in the other resources.

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