



The Use of Brown - Levinson's Politeness Strategies As A Realization of Sociocultural Competence Among Adult Learners of Elti Surakarta

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Abstract

This study focuses on analyzing the use of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies to reflect sociocultural competence among adult learners. English is an international language in international communication to talk with people of different age, gender, status, etc. Besides, politeness strategies can reflect somebody's sociocultural competence when he/she talks to others. At the beginning of this study, preliminary research showed that English was used as a language tool in the class for adult students in conversation classes. The adult students came from different backgrounds including job, age, gender, status, culture, existence, and experience. Some of them had been abroad and communicated with the English native speaker directly. A proficiency test was used at the beginning of the research. It was continued by a sound recorder, video recorder, DCT, and interview to get the data. The findings reveal the more prominent use in bald on record and positive politeness strategies. Those strategies, based on the theory of Brown and Levinson and Celce Murcia, showed there was a close relationship between the speakers. The rest of the strategies showed that there was a distance between the speakers. In conclusion, politeness strategies were in students' interactions to reflect their sociocultural competence. The suggestion focuses on giving practices to students to increase their experiences in implementing politeness strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

In this era, English has an important role in language development. It grows and develops with other languages such as Mandarin, German, French, and our national language, Bahasa Indonesia. English has an important role in language development as an international communication tool. In communication, especially doing conversations, we know about politeness strategies. Politeness strategies are strategies that are used to threaten hearers. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain four strategies that are included in politeness strategies; they are bald on record, positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, and off record. Those strategies also impact the realization of sociocultural competence. Human's sociocultural competence, based on Celce-Murcia (2007) is human's knowledge in the way of delivering messages with social and cultural communication; and this competence is crucial in oral communication. In line with Celce-Murcia, Brown, and Levinson explain the factors of using politeness strategies; they are social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition. Celce-Murcia also mentions those points and adds such as age, gender, social distance, and cultural factors. In our study, we used both of the theories to strengthen the result.

Some researchers researched politeness strategies and were concerned about sociocultural competence. The first studies come from (Najeeb and Maros 2012; Shahrokhi and Bidabadi, 2015; Dowlatabadi, Mehri, Tajabadi, 2015; Ryabova, 2015; Adel, Davoudi, Ramezanzadeh, 2016; Eshghinejad and Moini, 2016; Astuti, 2017). In their findings, the most strategies used were positive politeness strategies that were more direct and explicit to the hearer. However, Eshghinejad and Moini (2016) added in their study that there was no significant difference between gender and politeness strategies when sending an email. All male and female students used positive politeness strategies in

sending an email. This thing showed that both male and female students had close relations.

The second studies come from (Ogiermann, 2009; Fracchiolla, 2011; Kedves, 2013; Kusumaningroem, Rukmini, and Yuliasri, 2015; Kariithi, 2016;). Those researchers are concerned with politeness strategies as an important component in a conversation. Ogiermann (2009) and Kariithi (2016) had the same findings in which positive politeness strategies were mostly used by the speakers. Besides, Fracchiolla (2011); Kedves (2013); and Kusumaningroem et al (2015) found in their studies the most use of negative politeness strategies for formal events. Then, Kariithi found that politeness strategies were used depending on the social class of the audiences, age, context, relationship, and the aim of the conversation.

Next studies come from (Hismanoglu, 2011; Salehi, 2014; Sukarno, 2014; Kazerooni and Shams, 2015; and Suwartama and Fitriati, 2017). Hismanoglu (2011) and Salehi (2014) had the same points in their findings that high proficiency students are more confident to apply politeness strategies. Besides, Sukarno (2014) and Kazerooni and Shams (2015) delivered their findings that the use of politeness strategies was based on their background, such as culture, gender, and socioeconomic. Besides, Suwartama and Fitriati (2017) said that there were sociocultural constraints in the implementation of politeness strategies, especially in social constraints and cultural constraints.

The other studies concern politeness strategies; and it is seen from sociocultural competence. The studies come from (Faqeh, 2011; Alswed, 2012; Soliman, 2014; Ullah, 2017; Mollé and Chong, 2017). Most of them talked about culture and speakers' backgrounds which mostly impacted their language use. Moreover, Ullah (2017) who researched speaking English in Jazan said that English was not the culture in Jazan; and

going abroad was rarely activities done by the students.

METHOD

This study entitled the use of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies in Reflecting Sociocultural Competence is a qualitative case study. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2009), a qualitative case study is an approach that uses a single unit, class, and observes in the social and describes, interprets a phenomenon or process. This study used conversation class and social phenomenon that was students' interaction. This approach was supported by discourse analysis and a pragmatic approach. Classroom discourse was used to transcribe the students' interaction. Meanwhile, the pragmatic approach used the theory of Brown and Levinson to find out the implementation of politeness strategies. To know the reflection of sociocultural competence, classroom observation was used, and DCT (Discourse Completion Task) was supported the classroom observation.

This study was begun with preliminary research. Preliminary research was done by interviewing the teacher and staff. After doing preliminary research, the students were given a proficiency test, it had been tried out to the students from another class. Giving a proficiency test was aimed to measure students' English proficiency. The data was done by recording students' interaction by using a sound recorder and a video recorder. Then, the recording data was transcribed, grouped into the types of politeness strategies. After getting the recording data, the next step was giving DCT (Discourse Completion Task). DCT was arranged with clear instruction, and the students were asked to make a simple dialogue based on the situation. The result DCT was matched with the transcription or what students said in the recorder. DCT was supporting data to strengthen the description of sociocultural strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were divided into four parts as in Brown and Levinson's types of politeness strategies. There were 4 bald on records, 38 positive politeness strategies, 1 negative politeness strategies, and 13 off record.

Bald on record

Bald on record is a more direct strategy, to the point, and threaten hearer's face. The example below was the result of bald on record.

Rizky: Remember, don't forget to use the question mark

Rahma: a question mark. Ok

What Rizky said was bald on record strategy. Meanwhile, Rahma repeated Rizky's utterance that meant she agreed to add a question to what they work. After the discussion, we asked them to have a short talk with me separately. We asked whether they had a close relationship because Rizky expressed that utterance. Rizky answered that he wanted to get closer to Rahma as the younger member. He regarded Rahma as her sister. Besides that, Rahma gave the same answer that she was close to Rizky, she was often in one group with him. Rahma added that she wanted to be more direct, clear, and on point when answering Rizky's question. In this case, politeness strategies were not affected by gender and age. It was more realized on the social distance between the speaker and hearer, and their relative power. The finding was strengthened by my work partner who did the same topic of politeness: where sometimes in a conversation, someone could be more direct to avoid misunderstanding.

Positive Politeness Strategies

There were some types of positive politeness strategies that were found in the study. They were notice, exaggerate, intensivity interest to H, use in-group markers, safe topic, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose/raise/assert

common ground (gossip and small talk), joke, and be optimistic strategies. The below things were the example of the strategies.

Notice

Kris: Ardian, where will you go after this class?

Ardian: go home, of course. Why?

Kris: it has been long time that our class doesn't go together just for dinner.

Fera: yes, I agree

Ardian: Ok. Where will we go?

Kris: Mie Setan? Beside ELTI

Ardian: ok

What Kris expressed was a kind of notice strategy. Here happened when they finished the discussion, and Kris noticed that it had been a long time since not have dinner together. Fera and Ardian agreed with Kris' idea. On the sociocultural competence side, as the speaker, Kris wanted to show his close distance to hearers. He had higher power and wanted to impose a positive face. In building this description, we discussed with my friend who had the same topic in politeness strategies and supported me. She added that this notice strategy was used by them who had close relation, or knew each other. When we confirmed to Kris, Ardian, Rizky, and Fera, they answered that they often went out to a café after class. Positive politeness strategies was also used to build a natural friendship.

Exaggerate

Randy: Good. Wonderful!

Fera: Good yes

Hanung: Ok. Great!

Fera: Nice!

What they expressed was giving compliments. They did it in a discussion after doing exercises. Based on what they implemented, they expressed to get closer to each other and impose a positive face. Generally, many people like to be given a compliment. Fera, Hanung, and Randy were senior members, and they were often in one group. When I confirmed, they liked to give a compliment to what they did. My work partner said that she also found the same case in her previous finding that a group with the

same level members would be able to give a compliment to keep the hearers in a positive face.

Intensivity interest to H and Gossip

Rahma: what did you do Ms. Fera? What time you came to my campus?

Fera: maybe at 9 a.m. By the way, many handsome boys in your campus, aren't they?

Rahma: hahahaha. Why Ms? You like one of them

Those conversations drew intensivity interest to H by making a good story. In sociocultural competence side, those strategies reflect Indonesian's culture which likes gossip as a good story. Here, the reason why Fera chose gossip to begin the conversation was gossip was interesting topic. She often did some gossip with Rahma if they had spare time. She knew that the interesting topic for gossip was about boys. I also asked Rahma about it, and she agreed. She said that she liked gossip, sometimes she did small sharing with Fera about the boys in her college.

Use in-group identity marker and Joke

Rahma: excuse me, sir. I want took my glasses

Rizky: do you want me to take it, dear?

Kris: you wanna take the Aryanti's or Rahma's

Rizky: she has not come

Those conversations had use in-group identity marker "dear". Besides, Rizky's expression in the conversation drew that teased Rahma. As we know, in our culture, teasing someone is one of joke. Here, other members laugh after Rizky teased Rahma, and Rahma accepted that. She knew that Rizky was giving joke. The reason why Rizky gave the joke was because he wanted to impose positive face to Rahma, and build a close relation. He wanted to chill their relation, although he was older than Rahma. My work partner viewed that she also found the same case: giving joke to build a natural relation and getting someone's intention.

Safe topic

Hanung: Surakarta. Can you tell me your last holiday?

Fera: I went to Yogyakarta. Homes family

The conversation between Hanung and Fera was an example of safe topic strategy. On the sociocultural competence side, Hanung wanted to get closer to Fera. He chose a safe topic rather than a sensitive topic to impose Fera on a positive face. Here, in the video, Fera looked enthusiastic to tell her experience. The reason why Hanung asked about Fera's holiday was because it was not a sensitive issue. He assumed that everyone liked to share her holiday experience, so did Fera.

Seek Agreement

Rizky: just the answer, Mr. Hanung.

Hanung: just the answer but in paragraph

There was a seek agreement strategy which was given by Hanung. The reason why Hanung chose a see agreement was because Hanung was older than Rizky, he wanted to impose a positive face by repeating Rizky statement. When we asked about this to Hanung, he answered that they were in the same group at that time, and he wanted to get closer to Rizky. He felt that he and Rizky were male, so it would be easy to get closer. Our peer work partner added that it was the same case as in her previous finding that males could be easy to get closer.

Be Optimistic

Fera: Za, I borrow your note from Ms. Anggia, is it ok?

Zahra: Oh you mean this one, Ms?

Fera was optimistic that Zahra would lend her Ms. Anggia's book. Based on the video, they were in the same group, and Zahra's book was not used by her. The reason why Fera chose the strategy was because Fera wanted to get closer to Zahra She wanted to show her closeness to Rahma. The strategy drew Fera had higher power than Rahma and impose Rahma's positive face. According to our peer work partner, this case also happened in her previous finding if one of the partners was older than another. The older would use a positive politeness strategy.

Negative Politeness Strategies

There was only a type of negative politeness strategy which was found in this study, which was apologize.

Fera: Sorry, Mr. Hanung. What's your question?

Hanung: Where were you born?

Fera: I was born in Surabaya. Ya..ya Surabaya

This conversation happened when they were still on conversation, suddenly one of the members came, Fera was distracted and did not pay attention to Hanung's question, so she said sorry. When we asked her about her apology, she answered that she was reluctant not to answer Hanung's question. Besides, Hanung was older than her, she was reluctant if she did not answer his question. Another reason was because she wanted to keep Hanung's face. My work partner strengthened of my explanation that her previous finding showed the same case. It could be separated from our culture to respect the older.

Off Record

The honorific was the type of off record that was more found out in the study.

Fera: where were you born, Mr. Hanung? You grow up

Hanung: Wrop?

Fera: grow up

"Mr." is example of honorific strategy. As we know, our country has culture to respect the older one. Hanung was older than Fera, so she called him "Mr.". Even though, in the previous conversation sometimes they used positive politeness strategies, but in this case, politeness strategies reflected age and status. This cas was supported by my work partner. In her previous finding, she found her subjects of the study practiced them, calling other members "Mr. or Ms." to respect him or her.

Result of Matching DCT with Politeness Strategies Utterances

The result below was some students' DCTs, and they had been matched with their

utterances. The DCT was made by students' ability, and it was used to measure students' sociocultural competence. In this journal, we gave three samples of students' DCT.

Table 1. Matching DCT of Ranu with His Utterances Recording

Transcription	DCT
Ranu: Be calm. After this class, Aryanti and Rizky never separate. They will go home together. Hahahaha	Ranu : Hi, Ky. How long have you been here?, Where is Aryanti? Rizky : Not too long. I don't know, Sir hahaha

Between the transcription and DCT, we could see they made joke by talking about Aryanti, a female member of their class. Some students, included Ranu often made this joke when they were seen in the video; both of them gave positive vibes. The reason Ranu made the joke was because to build a positive vibes when talking with Rizky. He knew that Rizky liked joke, and the joke about Aryanti had been created by the teacher, and he followed the way. Although Ranu and Rizky liked joke, Rizky still respected Ranu by calling them "Sir". The respect was given because Ranu was older than him, and it had become the culture to respect the older one by calling "Sir".

Table 2. Matching DCT of Zahra with Her Utterances Recording

Transcription	DCT
Fera: Do you want to add new sentences sentences, Za? Zahra: Yea, that's good idea, I think, Ms.	Fera : Zahra, what about this? For your opinion, is it suitable sentence for no 1? Zahra : It is very suitable sentence, I think it can be written in the beginning of paragraph1

The same point between Transcription and the DCT was the honorific strategy that was used by Zahra. Here, Zahra constantly, called Fera "Ms." to respect her as the older one.

Table 3. Matching DCT of Kris with His Utterances Recording

Transcription	DCT
Kris: Bro, maksude ki, disebutke angger wae ibu e sangkuriang ki golek kayu opo. Dd ra cuma kayu tok Rizky: Oh yo..yo. Mudeng saiki. Lha jane disebutke kayu tok kan gpp	Kris : Hey Bro, how are you? Rizky : I'm fine, and you?

In the transcription, there were the same use in-group markers, and it was a positive politeness strategy. Either in transcription or DCT, Kris called Rizky "Bro". Kris and Rizky were close to each other as when we asked them in a short interview.

The most strategies used by the speakers were bald on record and positive politeness strategies. Somehow, the speakers also still implemented negative politeness strategies and off record. Bald and record strategy that was implemented by Rahma was in line with the result of Pangestuti's finding in her study (Pangestuti, 2015). Based on a short interview, Rahma's reason to choose the strategy or say the utterance was because she wanted to make clear in her discussion with Rizky. In the similar way, the reason was there in Pangestuti's finding when she observed a talkshow by Deddy Corbuzier to entertainer and non-entertainer guests. Deddy wanted to make the question clear and avoid misunderstanding.

The same case of the reason why positive politeness strategies were used by the speakers was similar to Pangestuti's finding in her study (Pangestuti, 2015). Pangestuti (2015) revealed in the talkshow, the host used positive politeness to impose hearers' positive

face and build a natural friendship. Although the host and the guest never met each other, but the positive politeness strategies could chill the situation more relaxed. The reasons were almost similar when I did short interview with the speakers who implemented positive politeness strategies. They implemented the strategies because they wanted to get closer to the hearer and become more intimate.

Beside bald and record and positive politeness strategies, the speakers also implemented negative politeness. Although the speakers and hearer were intimate, there were still limits between them when they talked with each other. The limited borders included sensitive topic such as family, couple, kids, religion, etc. In our finding, one of negative politeness strategies appeared was apologize. This apologize strategy was used to minimize imposition. In line with our finding, Pangestuti (2015) found apologize strategy in the talk show when the host wanted to ask about sensitive issue. Besides, it was used to avoid the risk of being bashful if the host's intention was rejected by the guests.

Our study also found the use of off record strategy that was honorific strategy. The honorific strategy was a strategy used to respect someone who had higher lever, or was older than the speaker (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In our finding, all the younger members called "Sir" and "Miss" to the older member. Then, the older members called "Sir" and "Miss" to other older members. The reason of it was because they respect them as the older member or someone who had higher status, for example Randy was a lecturer. Then he was respected by other members. The use of honorific strategy was in line with Sukarno's finding in his study (Sukarno, 2014). Sukarno mentioned it as culture of *andhap asor* and *tanggap sasmita* where someone talked to others, and what the way they spoke was affected by Javanese culture.

Based on the result of the study, we knew that the students had implemented

politeness strategies, even though not all the strategies were implemented by them. Most of them implemented bald on record and positive politeness strategies rather than negative politeness strategies and off record. As we know that when they implemented the strategies, they reflect sociocultural competence such as social distance, relative power, rank of imposition, gender, age, and culture. The way they spoke was impacted by Indonesia culture where it respected older people. It could be proved when they called older members "Sir or Ms".

Most of the findings had the same characteristics as the previous researchers. Let see the example when they called the other members by using "Mas, Miss, Sir, or Mr. Although, they were very close; in fact, there was a culture that impact the way they talked as being said by Sukarno (2014). Calling the older members by using those markers were named by *andhap asor* and *tanggap sasmita*. Besides, another sociocultural competence, such as gender was not the target of politeness strategies' realization. In line with Sukarno (2014), Hsu (2008) revealed that the use of politeness strategies was used according to the community culture. It was happened in my study. The students seemed close each other, but they still respected by calling "Mas, Mbak, Sir, Miss, or Mr". Male or female students, if they were close one and others, they used positive politeness strategies. This finding was in line with the findings of Kazerooni and Shams (2015); and Eshghinejad ad Moini (2016). There was no significant difference between male and female students when they implemented politeness strategies. Both of them used positive politeness strategies to whom were close, and negative politeness strategies to whom were older than them, even the older members were the same gender. In this case, age was the most politeness strategies' realization.

In the implementation of politeness strategies, there were many constraints as being found by Suwartama and Fitriati

(2017). The constraints included social and cultural constraints. Social constraints included social status, social environment, family status, economy/financial, social determinant of health, adverse childhood experience, social relationship, and kinship system; then, cultural constraints included perception, motivation, experiences, emotional, cultures, physical, linguistic, and non-verbal. From those constraints, there were similarities with what I found in my study. The similarities such as there were culture which impact the way the students implemented politeness strategies; lack of motivation, experiences, and linguistic ability. In line with the study of Ullah (2017) where in his study, he said that English was not Jazan students' culture, so the students were difficulty learning English. The difficulties included 1) English was not their mother tongue; 2) English was not their culture; 3) English was a foreign language; 4) The students had high motivation to learn, but there were only minimum facilities such as a native teacher; 5) Most of them never practiced at home or public place.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the students were able to implement 42 expressions of positive politeness strategies. Those politeness strategies reflected sociocultural competence including social distance, relative power, the rank of imposition, age, gender, and cultural factors. The cultural factors here were Javanese and Indonesian culture. When they implemented politeness strategies, they could not separate their culture.

It is suggested that English language teachers should teach politeness strategies to students, so that they can expand their speaking ability and the rules of speaking. For the students, become a master on linguistic competence is not enough, they should learn more about sociocultural competence.

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