
POLITENESS STRATEGIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

People are becoming more drawn to social media as a result of the rapid advancement of technology in this era of globalization. We still require manners when using social media, just like when speaking to people in person. The purpose of this study was to examine the politeness techniques employed in Facebook group chat. The study discussed the applications of the politeness techniques employed in Facebook group chat. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of related politeness tactics, the study was descriptively examined. The information was examined and put into the classification. The findings indicated that the majority of group chat participants utilized positive politeness, followed by negative politeness, off-the-record technique, and bald on record method as the least common. The findings of this study demonstrated how crucial politeness is in written communication. It can be used to minimize misunderstandings when utilizing social media.

INTRODUCTION

Being polite is crucial to successful communication with other people and impoliteness negatively influences the way a person is perceived, bringing judgments of being “rude”, “uncooperative” or “offhand” (Watts, 1989). The importance of being polite is caused by the content of conversation, since often what needs to be communicated is unpleasant and threatening to the hearer. Apparently, most of the first linguistic theories about politeness were created in the second half of 20th century and are being developed till present. Many of them are based on pragmatics, which studies the meaning of speakers’ utterances. Paul Grice’s works (1957, 1975) were one of the first, based on pragmatics and became greatly influential. According to Maxim of Quantity, the speaker should share with the hearer only the necessary information, and nothing more. Maxim of Quality conveys that conversation participants should say only what is believed to be true, with reliable evidence at best. Regarding Maxim of Relation, interactants are supposed to share only relevant information within a particular conversation. The Maxim of Manner, finally, states not to use ambiguous expressions, unnecessary verbosity and to express oneself in an orderly way (Grice, 1975, in Watts, 2003, p.56-58).

Lakoff (1973) in Yule (1996) proposes three rules of politeness: (1) formality: keep aloof; (2) deference: give options, and (3) camaraderie: show sympathy. Lakoff further argues that “the rules of politeness may differ dialectally in applicability, but their basic forms remain the same universally” (1973, p.303). Meanwhile, Brown & Levinson’s politeness theory (1978) makes the strong claim that most relationships between people are stable and are maintained by universal rules in respect of maintaining each other’s face. Brown & Levinson’s politeness theory is made based on the presupposition that “certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p.65). They suggest that threatening either the positive or negative face will influence the maintenance of relationships. With this rationale, Brown & Levinson (1987) propose five strategic choices for speakers as follows:

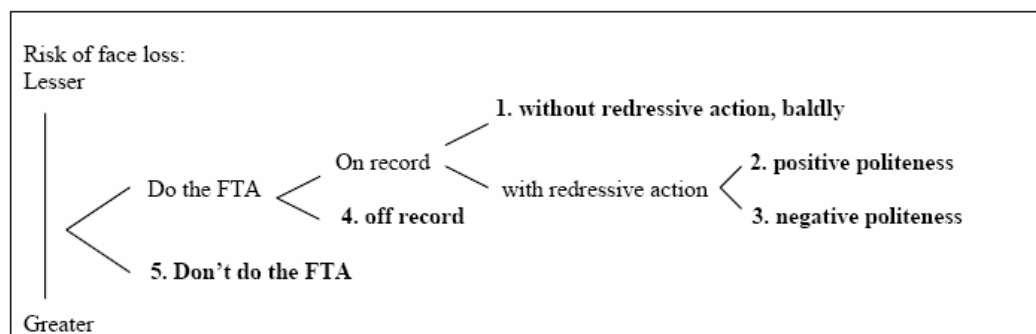


Figure 1. Circumstances determining the choice of strategy
(Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.60)

On the contrary there are two strategies with redressive action: positive politeness and negative politeness. “Redressive action” is described as “action that gives face to the addressee” and the speaker shows that there is no intention to threaten the hearer’s face and is also aware of the hearer’s wants (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.69-70). The difference between them is what kind of face is being emphasized. So positive politeness appears in case that addressee demonstrates his/her positive face, “positive self-image”. In this strategy attitude is important, especially the speaker’s. The Speaker should let the hearer know that he/she treats him in a friendly way, as cooperators, having “common ground”, showing respect, assuring interest in fulfilling the hearer’s wants, which minimizes possible face threat as well.

Regarding the necessary of using politeness either in the real context or social media context, it is interesting to investigate a phenomenon of politeness. The writer will try to find

the using of politeness strategy, particularly on Facebook since there are a large number of people tend for making and giving comment on Facebook. The following are the statement problems: (1) what types of politeness strategies used in making status in “*Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris*” on Facebook? (2) what types of politeness strategies used in giving comment of someone’s status in “*Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris*” on Facebook?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have various views on politeness strategies in different contexts. Akinwotu (2015) explored the vision for sustainable development using pragmatic strategies of media political competitive encounter. The study adopts a combination of Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness and facework, Watts’ (2003, 2005) relational work and frame theory. The final session of the Ondo State governorship election media debate of 2012 involving the three major political parties formed the bulk of the data. The data was electronically recorded and transcribed into the written mode for analysis. Two types of verbal behaviour (polite and impolite), projected by three context-driven politeness strategies (persuasive, offensive and defensive), marked contestants’ utterances. While persuasive politeness strategy (exemplified by promising and testimonial argument) projects polite verbal behaviour, offensive and defensive politeness strategies (deployed by contestants to categorize and construct one another as corrupt, inept, incompetent, unfit, dishonest, deceitful) project impolite verbal behaviour.

Omar, Ilyas, & Kassem (2018) addressed the issue of linguistic politeness and media education in its socio-cultural perspectives through the adoption of a lingua pragmatic approach of the Egyptian media, particularly their talk shows which are recognized education platforms in pragmatics. The selected talk shows from the Egyptian TV channels aired during the period 2011 to 2013 were used to investigate the changes that were felt in linguistic politeness, particularly in ‘forms of address’ used by presenter(s) of these shows. The study premised that these changes could contribute to media education in the form of enhancing media literacy about lingua-pragmatic aspects of ‘forms of addresses used on various media platforms. The study also followed the proposition that there existed a close relationship between linguistic politeness and pragmatics that often makes media as a means of social education. Secondly, a ‘form of address’ constitutes a welldefined media-educational pragmatic subject as revealed in its distinct lexical classes such as titles, personal names, nicknames and pronominal systems. These pragmatic strategies are often culturally bound and systematically applied by speakers within their community. The study cites instances of change in ‘Forms of address’ and the linguistic politeness culturally linked with the Arabic language. The findings reveal the extent to which socio-cultural and political events influenced the use of lingua-pragmatic terms like forms of address and the level of politeness embedded in them. The study has educational implications as it reveals how social and environmental factors shape people’s opinions and their use of language. The findings of this study would also offer novel learning opportunities for media personnel.

Shabrina & Ardini (2019) described the politeness strategies used in Ber-english Rialine group chat and the application among those strategies. This study was aimed at analyzing the politeness strategies used in Ber-english Ria‘Line’ group chat. The study was analyzed descriptively based on related politeness strategies classification of Brown and Levinson (1987). The data were analyzed and grouped into the classification. The result showed that the group chat members mostly used positive politeness followed by negative politeness, off record strategy, and the least used is bald on record strategy. It showed that the group chat members’ politeness was in the middle of very polite and straightforward. In the end, the most applicable politeness strategy used in Ber-english Ria ‘Line’ group chat was positive politeness strategy. The result of

this study showed how important the politeness even in written communication. It can be used in using social media to lessen the misunderstanding.

Anugrawati et al (2020) examined politeness strategies of Indonesian students in mediated communication. This study's main objective is to determine which politeness strategies students apply in communicating with their lecturers through text messages using Short Message Service (SMS) and WhatsApp messenger. This study employed an ethnographic research design. The participants were 29 English Department students consisting of 16 females and 13 males, and two female lecturers of Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar an Islamic private university in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The data were collected through the documentation of the messages sent by students to their lecturers. The findings showed that students most frequently applied negative politeness strategies in communicating through media with the lecturers. In text messenger communication, students mostly gave deference and used formal greetings in order to maintain a respectful distance from their lecturers due to power differentials.

Prayitno et al (2021) investigated politeness of directive speech acts on social media discourse and its implications for strengthening student character education in the era of global education. The purpose of this research is to (a) explore forms of directive speech acts, (b) identify politeness strategies for directive speech acts; and (c) formulate the implications of the politeness strategies directive speech acts of the #*sahkanRUUPKS* comments on social media towards student' character building in the era of global computing-communication. This research is qualitative using hermeneutical psychopragmatic techniques. The object of this research was directive speech acts uttered in the #*sahkanRUUPKS* comments on social media 2019-2020. Data were conducted through documentation technique, notetaking technique, observation technique, and theoretical triangulation technique. Data were analyzed using politeness model of Brown-Levinson and Leech supported by analysis of politeness model of Indonesian socio-cultural harmony. The results of this research indicated that the form of public's directive speech acts in supervising government policy plan through social media appeared to be actualized into suggesting, criticizing, reminding, appealing, calling, and reminding.

The recent study explored the politeness strategies in "*Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris*" on Facebook using Brown and Levinson (1987) theory.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method by using data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2018, p.74). Qualitative is chosen since the researchers will not focus on the numeral but the utterances of the conversation. Moreover, the researcher used descriptive research. It aims to describe the result of analyzing data on this research. Since the study is qualitative descriptive, the researcher described the result of the analyzed utterance in group chat conversation as the data. The object of this study is group chat on Facebook namely "*Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris*". In this study, the researcher used notes as the instrument. The researcher analyzed the conversations of the Facebook group chat to find out the politeness strategies used by the members of Facebook group chat using Brown and Levinson (1987) theory.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

For obtaining the data, the writer copied the statements from group on Facebook namely "*Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris*". There are so many people involve actively on this group by making status and giving comment in English. Most of them are interested in learning English.

They use Facebook as a media in learning English. The data can be shown in the following figure.



Figure 2. Facebook chat & comment



Figure 3. Facebook chat & comment



Figure 4. Facebook chat & comment



Figure 5. Facebook chat & comment



Figure 6. Facebook chat & comment

In this part, the writer provides the analysis to answer the problem statements.

1. The types of politeness strategies used in making status in “Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris” on Facebook. There are 4 statements found in “Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris” on facebook. Those are included:

Table 1. The types of politeness strategies used in making status

Status	Type
a. Salaaaam Dear Arjuna ,	On record; with redress; positive politeness (use identity markers)
b. I have a favor and I think it's gonna be a good idea.	On record; without redress; baldly
c. Is there anyone wants to practice their speaking? I would love to help you guys with it. Through skype probably? Please let me know if there's anyone interested.	On record; with redress; negative politeness (pre- request)
d. Hello guys and girls! I will open new project writing again.	On record; with redress; positive politeness (safe topics)
e. Do you have an interested about it? Just let me know ^_^.	On record; with redress; negative politeness (pre-request)

2. The types of politeness strategies used in giving comment of someone’s status in “Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris” on Facebook.

Table 2. The types of politeness strategies used in giving comment

Comment	Type
a. Me me me me.. !! (Figure 2) yeah.. will try if my net signal is ok. (Figure 4) Yeah...I am interested (Figure 5) I’m in	On record: with redress; positive politeness (be optimistic)

b. Just I still feel uncomfortable to post my number in here. Would you please give me the Captain's number, so I can text him/her and he/she can add me to the group.. (Figure 2) .. would u be my partner to speak with <u>him</u> ?? hehhee (Figure 4)	On record; with redress; negative politeness (be conventionally indirect)
c. It was such an interesting idea. (Figure 2) The first person I found with awesome English.. ^^ (Figure 2) You are look like a motivator same as Mario Teguh. You are really great! (Figure 3)	On record; with redress; positive politeness (exaggerate)
d. I will discuss it with my team. Next week, I may announce the decision. (Figure 2) Me! really wanna practice my speaking. (Figure 4) The debate is heated up. (Figure 6)	On record; with redress; positive politeness (avoid disagreement)
e. You have my respect, dear Sir. Use English in this group bro hahaha, don't forget that.	On record; with redress; positive politeness (use identity markers)
f. Oh..so sorry...my bad..	On record; with redress; negative politeness (admit impingement)

Discussion

After classifying all the statements above, the writer found the politeness strategy used by the people in making status and giving comment on Facebook. The data is analyzed by using the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987).

a. Use in-group identity markers

A strategy by using any of the innumerable ways to convey in-group membership, the speaker can implicitly claim the common ground with the hearer that is carried by that definition of the group. This strategy includes in-group usages of address forms, use of in-group language or dialect, and use of jargon or slang.

For example:

Arjuna : *Use English in this group bro hahaha, don't forget that.*

Pradana : *Oh..so sorry...my bad..*

The example above shows that the speaker (Arjuna) employs positive politeness by using in-group identity markers. Actually, Arjuna gives an advice to Pradana because he uses Indonesia language in this group. Arjuna uses the word 'bro' to address Pradana in order to minimize the FTAs (advise). Thus, Pradana positive face is saved because he has been appreciated by Arjuna.

b. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer)

This strategy is often conducted with exaggerate intonation, stress, and other aspects of prosodic, as well as with intensifying modifiers.

For example:

Akbar: Never underestimate a fool,,because people are often dumb we said it was someone more clever than we,,,(*Status*)

Nino: *You are look like a motivator same as Mario Teguh. You are really great!(Comment)*

The example above shows that the speaker (Nino) has satisfied the hearer's (Akbar) positive face. Nino tries to make a compliment for him by saying "You are look like a motivator same as Mario Teguh. You are really great!". The sentence *look like a motivator same as Mario Teguh* indicates the exaggeration. Thus, Akbar is satisfied because Nino gives sympathy to Akbar by exaggerating his comment.

c. Seek agreement

Another characteristic of claiming common ground with the hearer is to seek ways in which it is possible to agree with him. There are two ways: safe topics and repetition (Brown and Levinson, 1987:112). However, the writer only found the ways to in saving topics. The raising of 'safe topics' allows the speaker to stress his agreement with the hearer that the hearer's opinion is right.

For example:

Nino : *Hello guys and girls! I will open new project writing again.*

Angga : Yes I'm interested.

The example above shows that the speaker (Nino) has raised of safe topics that allow the hearer's opinion is right.

d. Be optimistic

In this strategy, the speaker assumes that the hearer wants to do something for the speaker (or for the speaker and the hearer) and will help the speaker to obtain the goals because it will be in their mutual shared interest.

For example:

Dayan : Is there anyone wants to practice their speaking? I would love to help you guys with it. Through skype probably?

Vinni : *Me! really wanna practice my speaking.*

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it can be concluded that, there are politeness strategies used by people in communication in "Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris" on Facebook as follows: (1) The politeness strategies in making status in "Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris" on facebook are bald on record strategy, positive politeness and negative politeness. The positive politeness strategies used in making status are seeking agreement and using identity markers. On the other hand, "pre-request" becomes the negative politeness strategy used in making status. (2) The politeness strategies in giving comments in "Group Gratis Kursus Bahasa Inggris" on Facebook are positive politeness (be optimistic, exaggerate, use identity marker, and avoid disagreement) and negative politeness (conventionally indirect and admit impingement).

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