

**POLITENESS STRATEGIES
IN DISAGREEMENT USED BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
STUDENTS OF MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF
SURAKARTA**

PUBLICATION ARTICLE

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education

in English Department



Proposed by:

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**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

2014



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OF MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

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SUMMARY

This research aims at describing the use of politeness strategy in disagreement used by English Department students.

The study used descriptive qualitative research which includes fifty students at seventh semester at English Department Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The data are disagreement utterances collected from interviewing by using Discourse Completing Task (DCT) as the instrument. The subjects are taken using random sampling which consists of twenty five male students and twenty five female students. The data are studied by using Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy, Pomerantz's disagreement theory, and Wardhaugh's social distance and social level theory.

Based on the research finding, the researcher found that bald on record (BOR) is the most appeared politeness strategy which has value as 64,66%. The second place is negative politeness (NP) as 16,89%. The third place is off record (OR) as 10,11% and the last one is positive politeness (PP) as 8,33%. The researcher found that male students use higher value of BOR than female students, while female students use greater value of NP than male students. Both social distance and status level affect to the type of politeness strategy. Social distance makes the use of negative politeness becoming greater. Status level makes the use of BOR less appeared. Social status also makes the use of NP becoming greater. In using disagreement, almost all of the participants uses strong form of disagreement instead of using the weak form.

Keywords: disagreement, politeness strategy, pragmatics, speech act, social distance, status level

A. Introduction

Politeness is a system of interpersonal relation designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange (Lakoff, 1990:34). Fraser (1990:233) views politeness as the implementation of conversational rights and obligations as speaker and hearer operate under the “terms and conditions of the conversational contract”. In most of the studies, the politeness has been conceptualized especially as strategic conflict-avoidance or as strategic construction of cooperative social interaction (Watts, 2003:47).

The most seminal theory of politeness was first introduced in 1978 by Brown and Levinson. Their names are always related with the term of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the central themes of politeness were rationality and face, which were claimed to be universal feature or possessed by all speakers and hearers (Brown and Levinson: 1987).

Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define face as the public self-image that every member of society wanted to claim for himself. In their framework, face consists of two related aspects. Those faces are negative face and positive face. Negative face shows the right to territories, freedom of action, and freedom from imposition. It demands one’s actions no to be constrained or inhibited by others. Positive face shows that people have desire to be appreciated and approved by the others.

In the rational actions, people take to preserve both kinds of face, for themselves and the people they interact with, add up to politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987:61) also argue that in human communication, either spoken or written, people tend to maintain one another's face continuously. As a speaker, people usually try to avoid making the hearer embarrassed or uncomfortable. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are acts that infringe on the hearers' need to maintain his/her self-esteem, and be

respected. Politeness strategies are developed for the main purpose of dealing with these FTAs.

The term disagreement has been captivating some researchers to conduct some research in linguistic area. Disagreement often occurs in every day conversation. It makes the discussion of disagreement becoming more and more popular in several decades. Koczogh (2013) believes that the term disagreements are complex and entail the widely-researched issues of impoliteness or politeness and inappropriateness or appropriate.

This research focuses on the study of politeness strategies used in disagreement by students of English Department in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The data are analyzed by using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) and Pomerantz's disagreement strategies (1984). This research paper will answer to the following problems:

1. The types of politeness strategies are used in disagreement by students of English Department
2. The difference in politeness strategy in disagreement used by male and female students
3. The effects of social distance to the type of politeness strategy
4. The effect of status levels to the type of politeness strategy

B. Research Method

The type of the research is descriptive qualitative. Morse said that Qualitative research was generally the development of the theory, description, and understanding, rather than precise testing of hypotheses to the fourth decimal place, social and in particular qualitative research (1994:3). According to Moleong (1989:3) descriptive qualitative research was a type of a research which result the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from observed object.

By using a descriptive method, the researcher aims to describe the politeness strategies of disagreement used by English department students

of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The object of the research is politeness used in disagreement by students of English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The data of this research are disagreement utterances. The data are taken from disagreement used by English Department students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta by using the nine DCT scenarios.

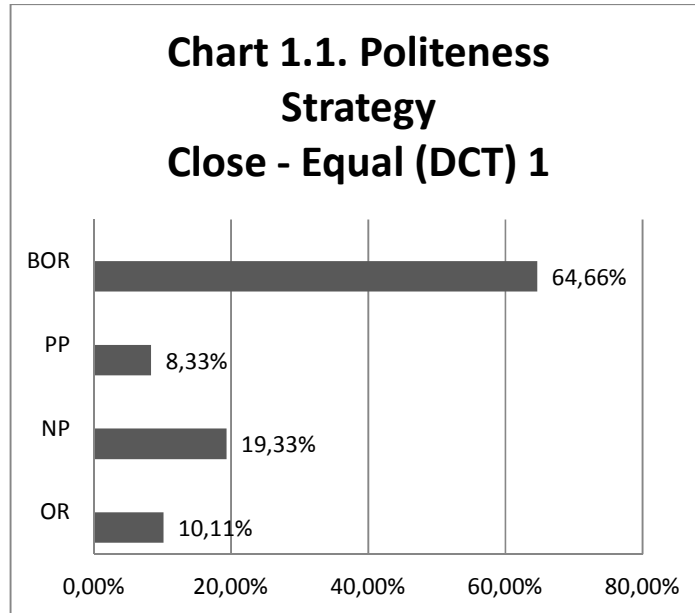
The researcher uses interviewing as the method of collecting data. In interviewing, the researcher uses DCT as the instrument. The techniques in getting the data are interviewing by using DCT and noting the expression in the paper. There are nine scenarios in the DCT. The DCT scenario is based on relative power, social distance and gender.

The researcher conducts the data analysis with the following procedures:

1. Describing the types of politeness strategies involved in disagreement by students of English Department by using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987).
2. Explaining some differences in politeness used by male and female by using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987)
3. Explaining the effect of social distance to the type of politeness used by using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) and Wardhaugh sociolinguistics theory (2006)
4. To explain the effect status level to the type of politeness used by using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) and Wardhaugh sociolinguistics theory (2006)

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result



Based on the chart above, it shows that the participants use all of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy. BOR is the most appeared strategy in situations which are related to social distance between S and H. BOR has an average value as 64, 66%. The participants mostly use BOR as what Brown and Levinson said that BOR is used when great efficiency is intended whenever S wanted to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than S wants to satisfy H's face, even to any degree (1987:95). The use of BOR dominates in all situations which are separated by social distance.

PP which has value as 8,33% is the least value of politeness strategies. PP is mostly appeared in familiar situation. As what Brown and Levinson say, disagreement threatens to the positive face of the H (1987:66). PP should be the most appeared value in showing disagreement, but in fact, PP stands as the least appeared strategy. PP is left behind from NP which stands in the second place.

NP, stands in the second place, has value as 16,89%. NP mostly appears in unfamiliar situation as 19,33%. NP could indicate that

social distance affects to the type of politeness strategy between S and H. Social distance between speaker and hearer could show closeness or solidarity between S and H. Solidarity is so important, it sometimes falls on one party to initiate the use of T (2006:262). When people talk to someone whom they did not well yet, people prefer to use such mitigating word. When people talk to the other who they have known well they prefer to use casual words or sentences.

The researcher finds that when the situation is unfamiliar, the value of NP is getting greater. While the least value of NP is in close situation as 14,67%. In situations which are related with social distance, S prefer to use strategy 2 (question and hedge) and strategy 6 (apologize). In strategy 2 of NP, S want not to presume and not to coerce H (Brown and Levinson, 1987:145). The second strategy is strategy 6 of NP (apologize). By using strategy 6 (apologizing) for doing an FTA, the speaker could indicate his reluctance to impinge on H's negative face and thereby partially redress that impingement. The example of strategy 6 could be found in the sentences which are started with "I'm sorry" or "sorry." The use of strategy 2 and strategy 6 is affected by the background of the participants. In Indonesian context, participant often show their disagreement by starting with word or phrase which contains apologizing and word "think." By using negative politeness, S could pay respect, maintain social distance, and avoid threat (Brown and Levinson, 1987:72).

OR which has value as 10,11% stood as third place of politeness strategy. The participant finds that the highest value of OR is in equal situation as 18,67%. It also finds that the lowest value of NP is in unfamiliar situation as 3%. While in familiar situation, the value of OR is 8,67%. It could be stated that when S has closer distance with H, the appearance of OR is greater. In unfamiliar situation, the participants prefer to produce disagreement directly rather than give hints or clues.

The most appeared strategy of OR are OR 5 (overstate), 9 (use metaphor), 10 (use rhetorical questions). By using OR politeness, S could run less risk of his act and could avoid responsibility for the potentially face-damaging interpretation (Brown and Levinson 1987:71).

The effect of status levels to the type of politeness strategy makes the use of BOR strategy becoming the most appeared strategy in all situations. Based on the chart above, it shows that BOR has an average values as 64,67%. Status level affects someone in producing utterances. People prefer to use more polite sentences when they are talking to someone who has higher level than him. When S is in higher situation, the value of BOR becomes lower. When S is in lower situation, the value of BOR became higher. BOR in higher situation has a value as 52% while BOR in lower situation has a value as 72%.

PP which has value as 8,33%. It is the least value of politeness strategies which are affected by social distance. PP is mostly appeared in familiar situation. As what Brown and Levinson (1987:66) say, disagreement threatens to the positive face of the H, PP should be the most appeared value in showing disagreement, but in fact, PP stands as the least appeared strategy. PP is left behind from NP which stands in the second place. The value of PP could be affected by the background knowledge of the S. It is also caused by the lack of understanding about the use politeness strategy in showing disagreement.

NP, stands in the second place, has value as 16,89%. NP mostly appears in unfamiliar situation as 19,33%. The lowest value of NP is in lower situation as 6,67%. This value indicates that status level affects to the type of politeness strategy between S and H. Wardhaugh implies that when people talk to someone who had higher level, people preferred to use higher sentences. When people talk to the other who lower level they prefer to use casual words or sentences (2006:277). The researcher finds that when the situation is unfamiliar, the value of

NP is getting greater. S prefer to use strategy 2 (question and hedge) and strategy 6 (apologize). In strategy 2 of NP, S want not to presume and not to coerce H (Brown and Levinson, 1987:145). The sentences which involve strategy 2 of NP use word such as “I think.” The second strategy is strategy 6 of NP (apologize). By apologizing for doing an FTA, the speaker could indicate his reluctance to impinge on H’s negative face and thereby partially redress that impingement. The example of strategy 6 could be found in the sentences which are started with “I’m sorry” or “sorry.” The use of strategy 2 and strategy 6 is also affected by the background knowledge of the participants.

OR which has value as 10,11% stands as third place of strategy. The researcher finds that the highest value of OR is in equal situation as 15,33%. It is also found that the lowest value of OR was in higher situation as 7,33%. While in lower situation, the value of OR was 7,67%. It could be stated that when S has equal level with H, S prefer to use OR rather than when S has lower level than H. In unfamiliar situation, the participants prefer to produce disagreement directly rather than give hints or clues.

The most appeared strategy of OR are OR 5 (overstate), 9 (use metaphor), 10 (use rhetorical questions). By using OR politeness, S could run less risk of his act and could avoid responsibility for the potentially face-damaging interpretation (Brown and Levinson 1987:71).

2. Discussion

a. Politeness strategies

The researcher found some interesting data when analyzing the sentences. BOR is the most appeared strategy which is used by the male and female students in almost every situation. Only in situation unfamiliar and higher relationship, most female students use NP as 28%. BOR as the most appeared strategy has value as 64,665%. In second place, there is NP as 16,89%. In the third

place, there is OR as 10,11%. In the last position, there is PP as 8,33%. As what Brown and Levinson (1987: 66) say, disagreement threatens to the H's positive face. It means that the use of politeness strategy should stand as the highest values. But in fact, the value of PP is the lowest level of all strategy.

The use of BOR is affected by language which is used by the participants in daily conversation. In Indonesian context, when showing disagreement, they prefer to say the sentence directly. BOR is dominated because most participants, as what Brown and Levinson (1987:71) said, could get credit for modesty, outspokenness. It also happened when the participants want to avoid of being seen to be manipulator. When they want to get the efficiency, the participants also use BOR. By achieving the efficiency they could avoid the danger of being misunderstood.

The use of BOR could be affected by the lack of understanding of the participants about how to make a polite disagreement. Since semester one until semester seven, students do not too much concern of how to make a good sentence which related to the authentic forms of the native speaker. Most of the sentences which are produced are affected by the language that they use in daily conversation. If researcher compares to the disagreement of native speakers, they prefer to use hints to show their disagreement instead of saying directly.

Not only caused by the lack of the understanding of the authentic sentences, the use of BOR could appear caused by the stereotype which is made by the participant. Most students in Indonesia make a stereotype that most English native speakers use direct sentence or are disposed to use impolite sentence when they are showing disagreement. It affects the participants producing disagreement as same as stereotype which they have already made.

The use of BOR could also be affected by the use of DCT as an instrument in collecting the data. DCT makes the unreal situation. The participants feel that there is no consequence which will be achieved. As a result, the participants use some negative words which could possibly threaten to the H's face. The result would be different when the participants are getting in real conversation. They may use some words which mitigate the meaning than what they have already used in DCT. In real situation, they should be more reluctant and will consider not using some words which show rudeness as in the following examples:

Are you crazy? (38/CE/M)

(0.2) . . . Teacher salary is quite – is quite is not quite much but – but it is better than your job. (48/CH/M)

(0.2) e . . . **you are stupid** (0.2) the real man without health cannot be mention as real man. (4/FE/F)

In OR strategy, the researcher concludes that when S is in close and equal situation, the value of OR will be greater than other situation. In equal situation, OR has value as 15,33, while in close situation, S has values as 18,67%. Such strategy in OR which appears are strategy 5 (overstate), 9 (use metaphor) and 10 (use rhetorical questions).

The other interesting data comes from the use of mix strategy in one sentence. In another word, some students, both male and female students use more than one politeness strategy in one sentence. In close and lower relationship, there is a sentence which contained BOR and OR. The sentence is as follows:

What's your problem? It's not your business. (38/CL/M)

That sentence contains OR 10 (use rhetorical question) and BOR. The rhetorical question could be seen from the sentence "What's your problem?." Rhetorical question is used when asking a question with no intention of obtaining an answer (Brown and

Levinson, 1987:223). The second sentence “It’s not your business” is the sentence which could be classified as BOR.

In familiar and equal relationship, there are some sentences which contain PP 4 (Use in-group identity marker and NP 6 (Apologize). The sentence is as follows:

Guys, I am sorry. The real man not have not to smoke. The real man I think the real man don’t be – don’t be other one else. Just be yourself. (35/FE/M)

The word “sorry” makes the sentence could be classified as NP and the word “Guys” makes the sentence is also could be classified as PP 4 (use identity marker).

There are also some sentences which showed rudeness or impoliteness. The examples are as follows:

(0.2) e . . . **but this can break of your teeth!** (48/CL/M)

(0.2) . . . Teacher salary is quite – is quite is not quite much but – but it is better than your job. (48/CH/M)

(0.3) . . . You tell that **bullshit.** (48/FE/M)

Those sentences are uttered by male students. Those sentences seem that S do not care about maintaining of H’s face. S are disposed to act rude and to uttered sentence which deliberately threaten to the positive face of H.

Male students have higher value than female students in using BOR strategy. Male students use BOR as 68% while female students use BOR as 63,55%. It indicates that male students prefer to say something directly and sometimes do not care of maintaining the H’s face, while female students prefer to use delicate sentences in disagreement. It is strengthened with the use of NP. In NP, students use strategy 2 (hedge, question) and strategy 6 (apologizing). Female students use NP as 20,89% while male students use NP as 12,88%.

The next interesting data comes from the effect of social distance to the type of politeness strategy used. Wardhaugh states

that social distance affects to the sentence between speaker and hearer (2006:262). It is clearly represented to the use of NP in situations of the DCT which are affected by social distance. S prefer to use NP such as strategy 2 (hedge, question) and strategy 6 (apologizing) in delivering disagreement. It is affected by the background culture of the participants. In Indonesian context, when someone wants to show disagreement they sometimes use apologizing words such as “sorry.” Even they do not use “sorry,” they used some word which showed that there is no pressure of accepting their disagreement. The sentences are often started with “I think” as in the strategy 2 (hedge, question).

In situations which are affected by status level, the researcher finds that social level clearly affects to the type of politeness strategies. As what Wardhaugh (2006:277) said that when people talk to the people who have higher level, they prefer to use some mitigating word or sentence which has higher level too. The example is in the use of NP. NP which appears in this situation is same as NP which appears in situations which are affected by social distance. The type of NP are strategy 2 (hedge, question) and strategy 6 (apologizing). The other interesting strategy is BOR. The use of BOR is also affected by status level of S and H. When S talk to H who have lower level, the value of BOR becomes higher. When S talk to H who have higher level, the value of BOR becomes lower.

b. Disagreement

In showing disagreement, both male and female students prefer to use BOR. The prime reason for bald on record (BOR) usage as what Brown and Levinson stated simply in general, whenever S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy H’s face, even to any degree, he will choose bald on record (1987:95).

The students mostly use strong disagreement in showing their response in all situations. Only a few of the participants uses weak form of disagreement. Weak form of disagreement is disagreements that occur in the agreement-plus-disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984:74). The examples were as follows:

(0.3) . . . **it is good idea, but** a successful cannot be measured from the high education. (13/FH/F)

The student in university may learn more but everything back to the person and God planning. (19/FH/F)

Yes, Sir. May be you are right, but to be a success person, there is many ways. (32/FH/M)

There are some markers which show that S appeared to agree in the beginning of the sentence and end the sentence by disagreement. Those sentences have form agreement and are followed by disagreement. Weak forms of disagreement which appear as in the above sentences are sentences which involved in PP6 (Avoid disagreement).

D. Summary

The researcher finds some interesting data. As what Brown and Levinson (1987: 66) said that disagreement should threat H's positive face. As a consequence, the use of positive politeness strategy in delivering disagreement should stand in the highest level. But in fact, the use of politeness strategies is dominated by the use of BOR in almost all situation of the DCT.

BOR is the most appeared strategy which has values as 64,67%. The second place, there is NP which had value as 16,89%. The third place, there is OR which has values as 10,11%. The last one, there was PP which has value as 8,33%. Male student have higher value than female students in using BOR strategy. Male students use BOR as 68% while female students used BOR as 63,55%. It indicates that male students prefer to say something directly and sometimes do not care of maintaining the H's face,

while female students prefer to use delicate sentences in disagreement. It is strengthened with the use of NP. Female students use NP as 20,89% while male students use NP as 12,88%. The strategy of strategies are strategy 2 (hedge, question) and strategy 6 (apologizing).

In situations which are affected by social distance, the researcher found that social distance affects to type of politeness strategy. When participants are in unfamiliar situation, the value of NP is greater than in close situation. S prefer to use NP such as strategy 2 (hedge, question) and strategy 6 (apologizing) in delivering disagreement. It is happened because of the effect of background culture of the participants. In Indonesian context, when someone wants to show disagreement they sometimes use apologizing words such as “sorry.” Even they do not use “sorry,” they use some words which show that there is no pressure of accepting their disagreement. The sentences are often started with “I think” as in the strategy 2 (hedge, question).

In situations which are affected by status level, the researcher finds that social level clearly affects to the type of politeness strategies. As what Wardhaugh (2006:277) says that when people talk to the people who have higher level, they prefer to use some mitigating word or sentence which have higher level too.

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