

Teachers and Students Politeness Strategies Observed in Inclusive Elementary Classrooms

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Abstract. Minding and assisting students in inclusive classrooms requires several types of competencies since those classes consist of students with different characteristics, abilities and even backgrounds. No exaggeration to say that the teachers' usage of speech acts and politeness strategies play an important role in helping the students in inclusive classes to understand and accept each other and also improve their own self-esteem. Adopting Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies, Yule's politeness and interaction, and Searle's Speech Act, this paper explores how the teachers and students apply their knowledge on politeness strategies and speech act during the teaching and learning activities. This study applies quantitative and qualitative data. The data were gathered through four video-taped observations and semi-structured interview. The subject investigated were four upper-middle inclusive classrooms consisting 10-15 students in SD Tumbuh 3 Yogyakarta and four teachers. The finding shows that there were four speech acts (directive, expressive, assertive and commissive) and four types of politeness strategies (bald on, positive face, negative face, off records) performed by the teachers. Directive speech acts and bald-on strategy are regarded as the most dominant speech and politeness strategies. Another finding also shows that the students have certain knowledge regarding politeness strategies yet they fail to apply them in communication through their peers and teachers. Therefore, it is concluded that basically the teachers have implemented the suitable strategies but they need to cultivate the students' communicative competence and attempt to give the students opportunities to practice more English speech acts than they do today.

Keywords: *politeness strategies, speech act, EFL inclusive classrooms*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, inclusion has become a world trend in special education. In Indonesia, the government has started to pay attention to the importance of the integrated education since in the late 1970's. In this education policy, the capable children with disabilities were given opportunity to attend regular schools together with their non-disabled peers [1]. Through the ups and downs journey, this project became the starting point of inclusive education in Indonesia. Inclusive education in Indonesia was officially initiated in 2003 based on the Direction Letter of the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education No 380/c.66/MN/2003, dated 20 January 2003, about Special Education in Regular Schools [2].

As also mentioned by [2], this Direction Letter stated that every district must operate at least four types of inclusive schools (one primary, secondary, general high and vocational high). Recently, it is indicated that the development of inclusive school is growing rapidly. By 2012, there had been 925 inclusive schools in Indonesia. In Yogyakarta, there are several public and private school which are selected to be inclusive school. SD Tumbuh is one of the recommended inclusive school in Yogyakarta. Having a tagline “setiap anak adalah individual yang unik”, the stakeholders of the school ensure that that school is supportive and engaging places for all school community members. Their vision is to build the communities that value, celebrate and respond to diversity. In other words, this school accommodates the students with special needs to attend the regular classes. It will be the replication of the real world in which the students with special needs face the future real world by having interaction and communication with the normal students.

One of best life values which is promoted through inclusive education is accepting one-self and others as God’s creatures who are equal, although they come from different backgrounds and have different abilities. The easiest way to see the implementation of this value is through the interaction which can be in the form of act of politeness. Basically, there is a project launched by Education Ministry and Department which is related to this matter. It is about character building which has been promoted since 2010 [3]. There are eighteen values that should be infused during the teaching and learning activities in Elementary and Secondary level, namely religiousness, honesty, politeness and tolerance, discipline, perseverance, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, patriotism, nationalism, appreciation towards achievement, friendship, preserving peace, literacy, loving and preserving the environment, social care, and responsibility [3]. Politeness is one of the character buildings values that should be prioritized by the educators and parents considering the degradation of morality of young generation.

Furthermore, [4] states that politeness is a common social phenomenon, and regarded as a moral code in human communication and social activities. In line with [4], [5, p. 60] defines that in term of interaction, politeness can be defined as “the means employed to show awareness for another person’s face.” Showing awareness for another person’s face when that other seems socially distant is often described in terms of respect or deference. In addition, [5] also emphasizes that politeness happens when the speaker can respect the listeners and vice versa. [6, p. 102] give us examples of positive politeness strategies, such as (a) expression an interest in and noticing the hearer; (b) using ‘in-group’ language; (c) noticing and attending to the hearer’s desires; (d) making small talk; (e) exaggerating interest/approval/sympathy with H; (f) intensifying interest in H; (g) seeking agreement/avoid disagreement; (h) showing optimism. While the examples of negative politeness strategies are being conventionally indirect. [6] also add questioning and hedging such as (a) pre-sequences to directives, (b) showing pessimism, (c) impersonalizing, (d) apologizing, (e) nominalizing, (f) stating FTAs as general rule, (g) minimizing imposition, and (h) deference [6, p. 131]

In addition, Searle’s Speech Acts are also reviewed in this study. [7] categorized speech acts into assertive (assertion, claim, report, conclusion); directives (suggestion, request, order, command); expressives (apology, complaint, thank, congratulate, welcome); commissives (promise, threat, refusal, offer) and declaratives (decree, declaration, christening, marrying)

In the classroom interaction, especially in inclusive classroom, it is not easy for the normal students to interact with the students with special needs or different ability. Therefore, the teachers’ roles in making the members of the class respect each are very prominent. [8] emphasizes that teachers’ talk or commonly mentioned teachers’ language is really crucial importance, not only for the management of the classroom, but also for the process of acquisition

and the development of the students' characteristics. Thus, it is much importance to know about the extent in which teachers apply speech acts and politeness strategies in classroom activities in EFL inclusive classroom. To strengthen the investigation in inclusive classroom, [9]'s types of teachers' language is also employed.

Lastly, the objective of this study is to investigate the teachers' usage of speech acts and politeness strategy in order to engage the students in inclusive classroom and respect each other. In order to reach the objective of this study, the researcher provides three research questions, namely:

What are the dominant types of the speech act performed by the teachers?

What are the dominant types of politeness strategies performed by the teachers?

To what extent the teachers and students practice politeness strategies and speech acts in the Searle's Speech Acts?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out at one of inclusive schools in Yogyakarta. The participants were 8-12 years old upper-middle students and four teachers. There were four classes that were observed, namely 2 English classes, a mathematic class, and a science class. Although some of the classes were not EFL classrooms, English is still used as the medium of instruction. It was noticeable that both teachers and students used English actively. Each class lasted 75 minutes. The level observed was middle-upper level. Each level in SD Tumbuh 3 consists of two grades. Therefore, in upper middle level, these classes may consist of the students in the grade 3 and 4, or 4 and 5. The students may come from different background, nationality, competence and ability. In the observed classes, the researchers found 1-3 students who were categorized as students with special needs.

This study applied a mixed research design because it involves quantitative and qualitative data. The data gathering instruments employed by the researcher were the recordings of teaching and learning activities and semi-structured interview. There were two steps compromising the data collection. The first step was doing the class observation and videotape-recording of those four classes. Meanwhile, the second step was interviewing the main teachers one by one. Basically, the researcher planned to have focus-group discussion, but it was impossible to arrange the schedule of the teachers. Interviewing the teachers was regarded as important technique because the researcher needed to confirm the findings and, in further, wanted to know the reasons of using certain acts and strategies.

To analyze the gathered data, the researcher transcribed the recordings. After that, the researcher eliminated the utterances in the recording and classified the utterances based on four types of teachers' language used by [9], four types of [6]'s politeness strategies and five categories of [7]'s speech acts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

In this part, there will be two sections which discuss the results of an investigation on the teachers' usage of speech acts and politeness strategies in order to engage the inclusive students learn and respect each other. The former will report the findings derived from the class observations while the latter is the discussion as follow-up of the research findings. This part will be divided into two parts, namely the application of speech acts and the application of politeness strategies. These findings are based on the class observations done in middle-upper level in inclusive elementary school.

3.1 Teachers' Speech Acts

One of interesting facts captured in the inclusive classroom interactions were the demonstrations of the speech acts by the main teachers. During the interactions, the teachers tended to exploit four types of speech acts, namely assertive, commissive, directive and expressive. Declarative speech act did not appear during the classroom observations. The following table shows the distribution of speech acts applied by four main teachers.

Table 1. Types of Speech Acts Performed by the Teachers

Assertive	Commissive	Directive	Expressive	Declarative
5.65 %	3.23 %	58.87 %	32.26 %	0 %
telling	offer an	asking	apology	
affirming	agreement	command	appreciating	
conclusion	promise	invitation	g	
		order	cheering	
		prohibiting	complaint	
		g	teasing	
		reminding	thanking	
		request		
		suggestion		

The table 1 shows that that over half speech acts performed by the teachers were directive. There were many types of acts under the directive speech acts found in the classroom interaction, namely asking, command, invitation, order, prohibiting, reminding, request and suggestion. The command and request acts are accounted as the most frequent speech acts executed by the teachers. It shows that the teaching and learning activities were mostly directed by the teachers. Asking was also quite frequently appeared because through this act the teachers can give comprehensive input and make sure whether the students has really understood the given input.

(1a) T : What do you know about global warming, Amara?

(1b) T : Please read.

(1c) T : Let's discuss together.

(1d) T : This is the camera, you have to see this point.

(1e) T : No pushing, okay.

Don't play game with the school i-Pad.

(1f) T : Is it good if you shout loudly to your parents?

(1g) T : Could you please put your workbook on the shelf there?

(1h) T : It's better if you can work with Anne.

The illustrations (1a) – (1g) are the detail utterances of directive speech acts. They are the examples of asking, command, invitation, order, prohibiting, reminding, request and suggestion respectively. Illustration (1a) is the form of asking speech acts. In this case, the teacher asked the students' knowledge about global warming. It was asked by the teacher in the beginning of the lesson as brainstorming of the learned lesson. Illustration (1b) depicts command type. It is easily recognized as it is usually in the imperative form. Illustration (1c) portrays an invitation type. Commonly it begins with the word "let's". Illustration (1d) is the utterance of order type. This type is almost the same as command type, but it has different form. Illustration (1e) indicates prohibiting. Using this type, the teachers forbidden the students to do certain actions.

Illustration (1f) is another type of directive speech, which is reminding. Using this type, the teachers reminded the students not to do some actions which hurt or disturb the others. Illustration (1g) is the example of suggestion. Anne is the name of student who has different ability. The teacher suggested some friends to work with Anne since both Anne and the other children can give and get more benefit.

Expressive speech act, the second classification of the speech act, is realized by the acts of apology, appreciating, cheering, complaint, teasing and thanking. From the four observed classes, it can be put into account that all the teachers were trying hard to make the teaching process as pleasant as possible. Appreciating, cheering and thanking were often applied to give positive atmosphere in the class. However, for the sake of the effectiveness of classroom management, teasing and complaint were also appeared during the observation. The following illustrations are the detail of expressive speech acts.

- (1i) T : I am sorry you cannot choose.
- (1j) T : Good job, everybody.
Excellent.
- (1k) T : Good, you all are good listeners.
It seems it is quite easy for you.
- (1l) T : I can't understand what you said if you are talking at the same time
- (1m) T : Do you listen with ears or mouth?
- (1n) T : Thank you very much.

Utterance (1i) reflects an apology. The teacher was asking apology because she did not let the students to choose the group themselves. This utterance is the only apology utterance found in the four video-taped observations. Utterance (1j) indicates appreciating. Teachers often use exaggerating words such as excellent, great, and perfect to appreciate the students' works. Utterance (1k) is another type of cheering. The teachers were trying hard to create positive atmosphere by saying those utterances. Utterance (1l) is complaint type. There were only three utterances of complaint found during the observation. In this situation, the teacher complained that she could not understand what the students said if they kept shouting and talking each other at the same time. Utterance (1m) shows the teasing type. It is interesting because the teachers' tone was a bit disappointed. Utterances (1n) represents thanking expressions. It was spoken when the teacher showed his/her gratitude to the students.

Assertive was applied as the second least acts by the teachers. In assertive speech acts, telling and conclusion were mostly exploited by the teachers in the beginning of the class to tell what they were going to learn and in the end of the class to conclude certain material or activities. Commissive speech acts were noted as the least one which cover two acts, namely offering class agreement and promising. The detail example of those two last speech acts will be illustrated below.

- (1o) T : We are going to talk about climate change
- (1p) T : No, it is not allowed to have more than 1 minute video
- (1q) T : You cannot choose your group. It has been decided.
- (1r) T : I will take your dollar if you are still talking.

Illustrations (1o) – (1p) show the utterances in assertive speech acts, while illustration (1r) signifies the commissive one. Utterance (1o) is telling act because in this case, the teacher was telling the students that they were going to discuss about climate change. It appeared in the

beginning of the lesson before or after brainstorming the topics. Utterance (1p) is affirming type. In this situation, the teacher answered the question asked by the students about the rules of making short videos. Utterance (1q) reflects conclusion that indirectly shows teachers' authority. Utterance (1r) is commisive type because it is dealing with the future, agreement and promise.

3.2 Teachers' Politeness Strategies

The observations also showed the politeness strategies performed by the teachers during the classroom interaction. As mentioned earlier, [6] suggest four politeness strategies to minimize the hearers' FTA. This study explores the teachers' politeness strategies to engage the students in inclusive classrooms to learn and respect each other. The detail of politeness strategies performed by the teachers will be presented in following table.

Table 2. Teachers' Pragmatic Contribution in Interaction

Class	Teacher	Students with special needs (=n)	Bald on	Positive	Negative	Off record
Class MU1	Teacher A	1	14	24	16	0
Class MU2	Teacher B	2	26	18	10	6
Class MU3	Teacher C	3	36	28	6	6
Class MU4	Teacher D	2	28	16	10	4
TOTAL			104	86	42	16

There were four classes observed and those classes were taught by different teachers. Although there were two types of teachers (main teacher and his/her assistant), the observed teachers were only the main teachers because the students' attention was directed to the main teacher only. Among 10-15 students in each class, there were one until three students with special needs. Table 2 compares the politeness strategies employed by different teacher during the classroom interaction. In total, among the four politeness strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987), bald-on politeness strategies are the most favorable strategy performed by the teachers. However, it is interesting to note that only three out of four teachers used this strategy more frequently than other strategies. It was only class A in which positive politeness strategy were mostly employed than bald-on strategy. In general, as well, negative politeness strategies were not many employed in all classes. In class C, there was a big gap between negative and positive politeness strategies. The number of negative politeness strategies in class C was the least one and it was one-sixth of the bald-on strategy or exactly the same as the number of off-record strategies. In addition, off-record politeness strategies were most rarely performed by the teachers. This result is almost the same as on the reviewed studies. The following illustration is the detail utterances of politeness strategies performed by the four teachers.

- (2a) TA : *Follow me please.*
- TB : *Now repeat after me.*
- TC : *No play with chair.*
- (2b) TA : *I can't understand what you said if you are talking at the same time*
- TB : *Talking about climate change, I believe that you all are familiar with the material*
- TD : *Dear children, have you already finished it?*
- (2c) TA : *Could you please put your workbook on the shelf there?*
- TD : *Would you like to answer this question?*
- (2d) TC : *Do you listen with ears or mouth?*

TD : Isn't it easy?

Illustrations (2a) – (2d) are representing the politeness strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). Utterances labelled (2a) are the examples of bald-on politeness strategies. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, this type is the least polite strategy. In this strategy, the teachers did the FTA on record without redressive actions. This strategy can be recognized when it uses imperative form. In some cases (like what Yule presented), the teachers add the word “please”, therefore, it sounds more polite. Utterances (2b) portray positive politeness strategies. In this strategy, it means the teachers did the FTA on record with redressive action addressing positive face. There is a good example shown by the teacher A. To minimizing the threatening acts of the students, the teacher did not directly say that the students must stop talking and shouting. She softened the language by adding the condition that she could not hear her students’ voice clearly. Another utterance of (2b) is also positive politeness strategies since teacher B used small talk before saying the main message. In addition, the teacher also exaggerated the interest and optimism. Utterances (2c) are negative politeness strategies because the teachers did the FTA on record with redressive action addressing negative face. Meanwhile, utterance (2d) are the examples of off record in which teachers did FTA by saying rhetorical question.

Furthermore, Xiaoqing proposes another analysis on the teachers’ politeness strategies in the classroom interaction. There are only two types politeness strategies, namely positive and negative but it must be analyzed across the functions of teachers’ language. The detail analysis about politeness strategies based on Xiaoqing’s classification is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Xiaoqing’s politeness strategies for classroom interaction

Xiaoqing’s politeness strategies	Classroom management	Evaluation	Instruction	Motivation	Total
Positive	9	15	36	18	78
Negative	15	0	20	12	47
Total (=n)	24	15	56	29	125

The numbers above are the representation of the teachers’ languages observed in the four-recorded classroom activities. Across the four functions of the teachers’ language, positive politeness strategies on the instruction remained the highest number among other functions and politeness strategies. Furthermore, in general, both positive and negative politeness strategies on the instruction function dominate the classification. Motivation was also remained as the second-most-favorable function in general but it seems the teachers do not prefer to show negative politeness strategies in giving the motivation to the students. To manage the classroom, negative politeness strategies are more frequently applied than the positive ones. Different from the motivation column, positive politeness strategies on classroom management have lower proportion than the negatives one. Meanwhile, positive politeness strategies on evaluating the students’ performance or tasks totally dominate the strategies across the evaluation functions. None of the teachers used negative politeness strategies when giving the feedbacks.

- (2e) T : Quite please
- (2f) T : Remember, 3 Indonesian words maximally
- (2g) T : Great. Keep working, Siena.
- (2h) T : Why can't you listen to others?

- (2i) T : Mr. Rio, could you please read this slide for the class?
 (2j) T : Back to your seat right now
 (2k) T : It's okay. So you can work together with Tania.
 (2l) T : I think you can work together well.

The utterances above are example of politeness strategies proposed by Xiaoqing (2013). Xiaoqing classifies the teachers' language by adopting Brown and Levinson's theory of positive and negative politeness strategies and its functions in the classroom interaction. As shown on Table 3, teachers' instructions still dominate the interaction. The example of positive politeness strategies on the instruction is utterance (2i). In utterance (2i), the teacher used honorific codes. Brown and Levinson (1987) define honorifics as "direct grammatical encodings of relative social statuses between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event" (p. 179). As we know that calling someone a name with respect makes him/her feel better and more important. In reality, the address is determined by the interlocutors' social distance or relative power, while in the teachers' case, his address for students help establish an equal teacher-student status, build up their confidence and create a relaxing and friendly atmosphere for teaching and learning activities. Utterance (2j) is also categorized instruction, but it is concluded as negative politeness strategies. It is so direct, no honorific code and no politeness markers such as "please".

Positive politeness strategies are also shown by the teachers in utterances (2e), (2g) and (2k). In utterances (2e), the teachers used politeness markers "please" in order to managing the classroom. Utterance (2g) is evaluative positive politeness strategy. It is noticeable that the teachers preferred using positive politeness strategies when giving feedbacks on the students' works. Utterance (2k) is another positive politeness strategy that was used to encourage a group of students to work well with Tania, a special-needs student in the class.

Negative politeness strategies are portrayed in utterances (2f), (2h) and (2j). Utterance (2f) is regarded as negative for managing the classroom although the teacher was saying this in warm tone. Meanwhile, utterance (2h) is clearly concluded as negative politeness strategy for motivating the students to listen the others.

3.3 Further Discussions

Based on the findings, the researcher found some interesting facts. First, based on [7]'s categorization and the functions of the teachers' language, the teachers employed more directive and expressive speech acts which function as instruction and motivation. After confirming to the teachers, they do not realize that they have dominated the classroom interaction because they used lots of instructions to make sure that the students understand every input. However, three out of four admit that sometimes they forget to use politeness markers and hedging to minimizing the face-threatening acts. The teacher admitted that they need to learn to control the instruction they produced. In addition, expressive speech acts are often employed by the teacher to make the classroom as pleasant and joyful as possible. On the other hand, they admitted that they need to exaggerate the expressive speech acts to motivate and give positive evaluation.

The second interesting fact is related to [6]'s politeness strategies. Table 2 conclude that bald-on strategy remained the most favorable strategy applied by the teachers. Bald-on strategy is regarded as the least polite strategy although politeness markers such as "please" and some hedges were applied. Through the interview, the teachers admitted that they need to control themselves not to use bald-on strategy. However, they basically preferred using bald-on strategy because of its simplicity. As explained earlier, one of the characteristics of bald-on record is

using imperative form. Moreover, if there are some students with special needs, the teachers must use the simplest form of sentence and daily vocabularies. This fact is on the contrary that teacher must explore the students' pragmatic competence by incorporating the pragmatic features on the teaching and learning activity. However, it is also worth mentioning, that there was a teacher who is noticeable using suitable politeness strategies. She was trying to use politeness markers such as hedges and "please" when she was asking the students to do something.

The next interesting fact is about the use of off-record strategy. As mentioned earlier, that off record strategy is probably the politest strategy. However, the educators do not suggest the teachers to use this strategy since it contains ironical statements and rhetorical questions which hurt the students' feeling. In this study, some off-record utterances were found. After confirming to the teacher, they need to apply that because the usual instructions did not work well. The example of this evidence can be seen in the illustration (2d).

(2d) T : Do you hear with ears or mouth?

In that situation, the teachers were asking the students with rhetorical questions. Teacher C used this form because she had reminded the students to listen when someone was telling for the whole class. Fortunately, this utterance was intended for the student with special needs in that class.

Another last-worth-mentioning fact is about the application of pragmatic competence (the use of speech acts and politeness strategies) of the students. It is noticeable that students, basically, have understood some pragmatic rules such as request politely. However, it was found rarely. The students asked request politely in Class A in which teacher applied politeness markers more often than other teachers in other classes. The following table is the detail of students' politeness strategies observed in the four inclusive elementary classrooms.

Table 4. Students' politeness strategies observed in the classes

Teacher	Percentage of teachers' politeness markers	Students' politeness markers
Teacher A	54%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you please help me, miss? - Excuse me, I am sorry I am late. - Excuse me, this is my pencil. - May I wash my hands? - I'm sorry miss. - Hey, this is my seat.
Teacher B	38%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hello miss - No, this is not mine. - Can you help me? - Sit here, Jhon.
Teacher C	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is too loud, you know - Yaa.. sorry - You cannot do like that.
Teacher D	32%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No, it's not mine - You will here, miss? - I don't want to listen. I have known the story.

Table 4 shows the students' politeness strategies when they were having interaction in the class. The interactions observed were between the students and teacher, or among the students themselves. It was noticed that politeness markers were quite used by the students in Class A. There were some examples of politeness markers used by the students such as using modal

could and may. The students also applied some expressions that indicate politeness such as excuse me and I'm sorry. Basically, some students in other classes also tried to show their politeness. It can be seen through some utterances such as can you help me, etc. They also used some honorific code such as miss and name such as Jhon. Therefore, it can be said that the students still need more exposures to get used to apply those politeness markers.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that teachers in inclusive classroom employed more directive and expressive speech acts to give instruction and motivation. However, when giving the instructions, the teachers used bald-on type mostly. There was only one teacher who applied positive politeness strategies more than bald-on ones. As the result, the students who practiced the pragmatic features, such as polite request, were only found in the class in which teacher explored the positive politeness strategies more often.

Therefore, it can be concluded that basically the teachers have sufficient pragmatic knowledge and competence in teaching the students in inclusive classroom. The teachers have tried hard to maintain the students' engagement in the learning process. However, they need to cultivate the students' pragmatic competence more by infusing more pragmatic features during the process of teaching and learning in the class.

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