POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY LECTURERS AND STUDENTS IN THESIS GUIDANCE THROUGH VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS

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Abstract: Politeness is an essential element of communication and is used to assure the quality of a relationship through language. Politeness in English classes is paramount to study because the sense of decency is indispensable. In another condition, virtual communication to some extent is challenging since it requires some rules to run proper interactions between lecturers and students. The use of polite expressions is one of the rules to obey, especially in thesis guidance. This study is strived to see the use of politeness strategies in the interaction between lecturers and post-graduates at one state university in Lampung through virtual communication. This study employed qualitative method where the documentation was used to collect the data. The data of this study were conversation between the lecturer and the students through virtual communications: WhatsApp and E-mail. The findings reveal that (1) the positive politeness strategy was strategy mostly used by the students; (2) the lecturer mostly utilized bald-on record strategy, and (3) several factors were believed to influence the use of politeness strategies such as power, institutional position, social distance, age as well as social culture.

Keywords: *ELT classroom, politeness strategies, thesis guidance, virtual communication*

INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes, when somebody learns a language, is to be communicative (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020; Hery, 2017). It is also one of the purposes of learning a language, along with the ability to interact with others. In light of this, communicative competence evolves into a fundamental skill for a language learner to master to communicate effectively (Ellisafny, 2013; Poolsawad, Kanjanawasee, & Wudthayagorn, 2015).

Nevertheless, obtaining the same understanding between and among the speakers in an English classroom is quite challenging. When students interact, they are often under-equipped, leading to psychological factors such as fear of being wrong and

fear of criticism (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2013; Shen & Chiu, 2019). As a result of these factors, students' self-confidence in interacting through English is inconsequential. They typically encounter barriers in transferring their ideas to be well comprehended by the listeners (Kurdghelashvili, 2015; Zhang, 2009).

Furthermore, several studies have found both teachers and students have different communication styles (Fitriyah, 2018; Monsefi & Hadidi, 2015; Sdeeq, Sulaiman, Hamad, & Abdullah, 2021; Wangia & Otonde, 2020). Thus, to create an effective classroom interaction between teachers and students, a communication strategy in the classroom setting is needed. Likewise, several studies have found both teachers and students have distinguishable communication styles (Tan, Teoh, & Tan, 2016). Besides, communicating and interacting in English classes is not only about transferring knowledge from English teachers to language learners but also viewing how to communicate politely.

Politeness has been defined by many different scholars. According to Lakoff (1977), politeness is a form of behavior that has evolved in societies to reduce friction in personal interaction, whereas Sifianou (1992) defined politeness as a means of restraint of feelings and emotions to avoid conflicts. Meanwhile, politeness, according to Holmes (1995), is formal and distancing behavior that does not intrude or impose thus, to be polite is persistent with respect. According to Yule (1996), politeness is used to show cognition of other people's faces that took place during the interlocutors' interaction. Moreover, Goffman (1955) distinguishes face as a person's positive public image that is established through social interactions. It can be a form of praise, honor, or self-esteem.

The popular theory of politeness is the Brown and Levinson (1987) face-saving view. The concept of face is central to this theory (Goffman, 1967). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the face is the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself. Everyone wants to keep the other person's face; otherwise, Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) such as being offended or annoyed may occur. Being polite means preserving face and avoiding actions that endanger each other face. Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed four types of politeness, those are bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record.

The interactions between teachers and English learners do not take place solely in the classroom. It does, however, transpire outside of the teaching process and uses social media as its medium (Bagarukayo, 2018; Keasberry, 2018). The interactions such as discussion of learning topics, distribution and delivery of tasks, and consultation of scientific papers frequently use virtual communication media such as e-mail, Telegram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Through this, effective teacher-student interactions will create emotional support which means positive relationships among teachers and students (Hoque, 2016; Ruzek et al., 2016). Some studies reported that politeness strategy through social media can contribute to the success of effective communication inside also outside of the classroom (Maros & Rosli, 2017; Najeeb et al., 2012). The EFL learners' politeness practices also are influenced by religious and cultural factors (Mahmud, 2019), age, gender, social class, education, and cultural background (Eshghinejad & Moini, 2016). Moreover, the linguistic and cultural background is believed to be an indicator of politeness or impoliteness (Zander, 2013).

Some previous research found that interactions between teachers and English learners through virtual communication such as WhatsApp indicate that students

employed more politeness strategies than their teachers (Mulyono et al., 2019). Moreover, the students employed a variety of politeness strategies, which are visible in social media discourse to enable them in forming and maintaining relationships with one another (Gervasio & Ireri, 2019). Another study revealed that politeness strategies used by lecturers and students appear to be somewhat different from previous similar studies. Furthermore, the use of nonverbal language in interaction, such as emoticons, is part of politeness strategies to maintain positive interactions between students and lecturers during thesis consultation via *WhatsApp* (Pasaribu, Saragih, & Gea, 2021).

Many researchers have conducted research on the politeness strategy through social media and virtual communication (Adel et al., 2016; Ambarwati et al., 2019; Dąbrowska, 2012; Eshghinejad & Moini, 2016; Junita, 2021; Palupi & Endahati, 2019; Park, 2013; Putri & Sakti, 2019; Rahmawati, Hidayat, & Kurniawan, 2021; Schallert et al., 2009; Shum & Lee, 2013; Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021; Suroso, Suwandi, & Sumarlam, 2017; Utomo, Sembada, & Muharam, 2021). However, the study of politeness strategies in thesis guidance and consultation by post-graduate students and lecturers through virtual communications has not been widely documented. As a result, this study focuses on the use of politeness strategies in virtual communication by lecturers and post-graduate students in the context of thesis guidance and consultation at the University of Lampung. The results are expected to contribute to understanding politeness strategies in EFL classroom interactions. It may also be used by practitioners of classroom interaction, particularly English teachers, and students, to construct an effective EFL classroom interaction through virtual communications.

METHODOLOGY
Subjects
The study was carried out at the English Department of Lampung University. The participants were three lecturers and post-graduate students of English Department batch 2020. The data were gathered from individual WhatsApp and e-mail thesis consultation chats. The data used were taken from screenshots of thesis consultation chats.

Design and Procedure
The purpose of this research is to illustrate the politeness strategies used by postgraduate students during their thesis consultation with their advisors. The thesis supervisor and students communicated via WhatsApp also e-mail during the thesis guidance process. This study used qualitative research. The qualitative method is used to allow for the codification and interpretation of WhatsApp and e-mail texts from lecturer-student communication (Creswell, 2009).

Data Collection and Data Analysis
The data analysis is based on the politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). In this study, the student communication data on *WhatsApp* as well as *e-mail* were described, coded, grouped, and interpreted to get insights into the strategy patterns used by Lecturers and Post-Graduate students of the English Department, Lampung University.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
    The study found the four politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) as much 63 data in WhatsApp as well as e-mail chats communication between the lecturers and the students during thesis consultation which is described in the following table.

Table 1. Description data of politeness strategies

No	Politeness Strategies	Frequency	Percentages
1	Bald-on Record Strategies	25	39,68 %
2	Positive Politeness Strategies	29	46,03 %
3	Negative Politeness Strategies	7	11,11 %
4	Off-Record Strategies	2	3,17 %
	N	63	100%

    According to the data in table 1, positive politeness strategies are the most widely used of the four politeness strategies, with data frequency as high as 29 times and a percentage of 46.03 percent. The bald-on record strategies accounted for 39.68 percent of the data. Meanwhile, negative politeness strategies and off-the-record strategies were used 7 and 2 times in thesis consultation conversations by lecturers and students, respectively. Besides, to address the research objectives, the data on politeness strategies used by both lecturers and students in thesis consultations are presented, and the explanations of the data are described in the following four sub-explanations.

Bald-on Record Strategy
    The term "bald on record" refers to a form of politeness in which the speaker assumes a more powerful and authoritative position than the listener. Under these circumstances, the speaker does not make an effort to restrict threats to the face of the hearer. The listener is frequently astonished, embarrassed, and annoyed by the speaker. Within the parameters of the ongoing study, the lecturer is in a position to utilize more authority and hold a more prestigious social position than the students. The following table is the realization of bald-on record strategies employed by the lecturers and the post-graduate students.

Table 2. The data realization of bald-on record strategy

Bald-on Strategies	Lecturer		Student	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Imperative	4	28.57	-	-
Advise	4	28.57	-	-
Warning task-oriented	2	14.28	-	-
Asking permission	-	-	1	9.09
Greeting	4	28.57	10	91.10
N	14	100	11	100

    Based on table 2 above, the lecturers used bald-on record strategies more than students did through virtual communication using WhatsApp and e-mails. This can be determined by the total percentage which is 56 percent (14 times) compared to 44 percent (11 times), with details giving commands, suggestions, and answering

greetings as many as 4 data found, while two data identified in warning task-oriented. Meanwhile, students are more likely to use greetings as bald-on record strategies during thesis consultations, with a percentage of 91.1 percent. The realization of the bald-on record in thesis consultations is as follows.

| Lecturer AN | : | **Dear NY**, the background of your proposal is ok but not the research questions. **Please re-write what you are going to find out through the research** |
| Student NY | : | Alright Mam. I will do best. |

<div align="right">Excerpt 10</div>

In excerpt 10, at least two bald-on record strategies were delivered by the lecturers to the students. First, the word *dear* is also one of the greetings. The lecturer did this to feel close to the student whom she mentored. Secondly, the lecturer instructed the student to revise research questions that were not in line with what she desired. This utterance is part of the imperative category in bald-on record strategy.

| Lecturer CS | : | **The important thing is that DDDE is properly implemented and illustrated in research questions and designs; Maybe before RQ 1, there was an investigation for the first D.** |
| Student NA | : | Alright Prof. I revise on research questions soon. |

<div align="right">Excerpt 6</div>

The transcript of the conversation in excerpt 6 between the lecturer and the student contains an element in bald-on a strategy; that is advise. This can be seen in the message given to students by the lecturer to prepare and illustrate *DDDE* (Decide, Design, Develop, and Evaluation) on research questions. Furthermore, the lecturer suggested that an initial step should be completed as a form of elaboration of the first step of *DDDE*.
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Positive Politeness Strategy

Positive politeness is a strategy that speakers employ to maintain a positive expression on the face of their audience. When interacting, this strategy is utilized to keep the speaker-hearer bond strong by fostering feelings of affection, warmth, and mutuality. A variety of constructive approaches to politeness that were utilized by both the lecturer and the students was found in the current study.

There was a statistically significant difference in the use of positive politeness by the students and the lecturers. There is a percentage of 25% or 7 utterances which were made by the lecturers out of 28 data, while 21 or 75% were found in student-to-lecturer conversations. Table 3 below presents data frequency and percentage of positive politeness.

Table 3 shows that there are two words identified as positive politeness often used by the lecturer, such as agreement and thank you. The lecturer also used joking, offering and promising as well as asking for reason but with minor portion. This would be very different from what students say to lecturers; there were 5 utterances on the agreement, 11 utterances on thank, 3 utterances on asking for reason and 2 for avoiding disagreement. The data of student and lecturer conversations with virtual

communication is interesting in that a lecturer used jokes to make the process of thesis guidance and consultation became more fluid and did not appear rigid, as well as the process of interaction with feedback shown by asking for reason between students and lecturers.

Table 3. The data of positive politeness strategies

Positive Politeness Strategies	Lecturer		Student	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Exaggerate interest	-	-	-	-
Using in-group identity	-	-	-	-
Agreement	3	28.57	5	23.80
Addressing form	-	-	-	-
Avoiding Disagreement	-	-	2	9.52
Joking	1	14.28	-	-
Offering and Promising	1	14.28	-	-
Asking for reason	1	14.28	3	14.28
Thank	2	28.57	11	52.38
N	8	100	21	100

In excerpt 5, lecturers sent stickers with the word *"waduh,"* which means suppressing. It was intended as a joke to bring students closer to the conversation. The lecturer then asked the student to submit a thesis proposal. The word *"alright Prof"* was meant as avoiding disagreement made by the students. This was done in response to the lecturer request. The sentence was written by the student here *I send my own thesis draft* was agreement toward the request.

Student NY	:	Assalamualaikum Wr Wb
		Good Morning Prof. I am sorry Prof for disrupting your times. I am NY, MPBI's batch 2020. As I have seen the announcement on thesis advisor was distributed, I will be guided by Prof. CS well as Dr. AN. Hope, I may get helpful guidance and suggestion from Prof. Thank you.
		Keep being healthy Prof.
		Wassalamualaikum Wr Wb
Lecturer CS		**Sticker (He sent sticker Mr. Bean with the word***" Waduh")* **send your thesis title, research question and research design**.
Student NY		**Alright Prof**. **Here I send my own thesis draft.**

Excerpt 5

In contrast to excerpt 5, excerpt 9 contains a dialogue between lecturer and student that employed positive politeness strategies by bringing up several points. First, when students sent messages to lecturers through the use of WhatsApp *"I am sorry Prof, I want to consult my thesis proposal"*. This message intended that the student requested a thesis consultation schedule with the lecturer. The utterance was part of asking for reason in positive politeness strategies.

To respond to the student's request, the lecturer replied that the student may come to campus, then the student asked when he could meet, and the lecturer offered the time. Because at the same time, the student could not come on that day, he asked to

meet tomorrow by sending the message *"Could I meet the next day Prof?"*. In positive politeness strategies, it was meant as an offering. The lecturer agreed on a meeting for consultation and thesis guidance. The confirmation of the willingness of the lecturer to meet his student with positive politeness strategies was included in the agreement.

Student NY	:	Assalamualikum Wr Wb
		I am sorry Prof. I want to consult my thesis Proposal.
Lecturer CS	:	Come to campus**.**
Student NY	:	When I may come to see Prof?
Lecturer CS	:	Today?
Student NY	:	I do apologize Prof. Today, I am still in Lampung Timur.
		Could I meet the next day Prof?
Lecturer CS	:	It is okay

Excerpt 9

Negative Politeness Strategy

Negative politeness is a strategy that speakers use to maintain the hearer's negative face by concealing their faces and communicating with caution. This is done to keep the hearer's negative face. In this study, it was found that there was one data apology from lecturer to the student, while there were six apologies from student to lecturer.

Table 4. The data realization of negative politeness strategies

Negative Politeness Strategies	Lecturer		Student	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Reduce obligation	-	-	-	-
Apologize	1	100	6	100
Impersonalize	-	-	-	-
N	1	100	6	100

The transcript of a conversation between student NY and lecturer AN on excerpt 3 began with saying "*I am sorry Mam. I am going to consult my thesis proposal*" as if the student requested a consultation schedule. The lecturer then inquired whether the student had sent a draft thesis to her via e-mail. The student replied that he had submitted his thesis draft two months ago.

Student NY	:	Assalamualaiakum Wr Wb Good Morning Mam.
		I am sorry Mam. I am going to consult my thesis proposal.
		Thank you, Mam.
Lecturer AN	:	Waalaikumsalam, NY. Have you e-mailed the proposal?
Student NY	:	Already Mam, for Chapter I.
Lecturer AN	:	When?
Student NY	:	On September 7 th Mam.
Lecturer AN	:	**Oh, so sorry, I am going to check it. Thanks**
Student NY	:	You are welcom Mam

Excerpt 3

The lecturer apologized for the delay in correcting the thesis draft, by sending a message, *"Oh, so sorry, I am going to check it. Thanks".* The utterance from student NY at the beginning of the conversation and the apology response by lecturer NA are called apologies in negative politeness strategies.

Off-Record Strategy

Off-record politeness is a strategy whereby the speaker uses utterances that allow the listeners' to define them with various meanings based on the speaker's explanation. Two pieces of data on the strategy were found in this study. It was more interesting since the strategy of giving clues was employed by the lecturers.

Table 5. The realization of off-record strategies

Off-Record Strategies	Lecturer		Student	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Giving a clue	2	100	-	-
Using Metaphor	-	-	-	-
Ambiguous	-	-	-	-
N	2	100	-	-

Excerpt 7 depicted a conversation that included a clue from the student's question. The answer to the student's question was not clearly explained by the lecturer. He then forwarded the e-book to the students. This was done in order that the student can read and get the answer to his question.

Student NY	:	Is it such need analysis Prof?
Lecturer CS	:	**The theory exists in Dick, Carey and Carey. The Systematic Design of Instrument.**
Student NY	:	Alright Prof. Thank you Prof. I am going to read the book soon.
Lecturer CS	:	**This is the book (sending the E-Book)**
Student NY	:	Thank you very much Prof.

<div align="right">Excerpt 7</div>

To hold a positive relationship between lecturers and students during the communication, both inside and outside the classroom, politeness strategies in interactions are strongly critical (Peng, Xie, & Cai, 2014). Besides, classrooms act as a space where teachers and students connect. To be effective, it ought to be excellent. Students will receive the teacher's information if the classroom interaction is going smoothly (Karimnia & Khodasenas, 2017). When it comes to their professional role as educators, teachers have the control to evaluate their students' conduct, determine their freedom of action, and exercise control over their classroom resources. They offer required feedback, which puts them at risk for their students' positive and negative aspects (Jiang, 2010).

Discussion

The result of this study confirms that the lecturer used the bald on record strategy more frequently than students. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Pasaribu et al. (2021) who found that lecturers are sometimes higher than students

in terms of affirmative expressions. They also utilize politeness strategies to make students feel satisfied reconsidering students' thesis (Pasaribu et al., 2021). It can be proven that all politeness strategies are used by both lecturers and students. In addition, the results of the study also illustrate that communication and interaction between lecturers and students are very diverse although some studies report that lecturers tend to use positive politeness strategies with students (Heriyawati et al., 2019; Nugrahanto & Hartono, 2020).

In this study, the use of greetings, such as *Assalamualaiakum Wr Wb*, is a form of the positive strategy carried out by students, then responded to by lecturers, and is an Islamic or any religious symbol to maintain the relationship between lecturers and students(Al-Khatib, 2012; Bouchara, 2015; Mahmud, 2019).

There are at least three factors that are believed to influence the practice of politeness strategies between the lecturers and post-graduate students of the setting. Those are power, institutional position, and social distance. In terms of power, the finding showed that there is an asymmetrical power relationship between students and lecturers. In the academic context, lecturers are supposed to have much knowledge and experience (Peng et al., 2014). Thus, the lecturers are in full control of each learning process and dominant in communication. Then, it causes turn-takings, directness, and choice of words of the students while communicating with the lecturers (Farrokhi & Arghami, 2017; Zunaidah et al., 2020). The data shows that lecturers spread a dialogue with students through discussion of ideas in the guidance process. Through this communication pattern, the lecturers want to reduce their power as teachers. This is in line with the research conducted by Senowarsito (2013) who found that the instructors endeavor to provide weight to the students' participation in providing thoughts, emotions, and opinions (Senowarsito, 2013). In addition, negative strategies tend to be used by someone who has the power to avoid threatening the face (Jeanyfer & Tanti, 2018).

The second factor that affects the strategy used is institutional position. The lecturers are the guiders in the classroom learning activities and also in composing thesis projects, and therefore they have more authority over students and have more power than students (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020). In line with this, Putri and Sakti (2015) said that social status among students and lecturers also affects politeness strategies. Students will employ polite language when they utter with influential people or if they are influential people (Putri & Sakti, 2019). Besides power and formality dimensions, one of the essential factors demarcating the appropriate level of politeness manners is the speaker's relative social distance from the addressee (Arif et al., 2018).

Other factors, according to the study, influence the usage of politeness in interactions between lecturers and students. The first factor is linguistics politeness. Language students at least have studied politeness theory at the bachelor's and master's education levels regarding pragmatics course. Linguistic politeness has been reminisced in utterances that maintain the meaning intended by the speakers to be transferred to the other participants of the communicative event (Seken, 2011). A variety of linguistic politeness can be found in conversations between lecturers and students, such as *"Please"* (excerpt 10). In addition, the age factor is also considered to have the potential to affect. The master's degree at the University of Lampung is dominated by learners aged 25 to 40 years. This age influences the diction and communication between the students and the lecturers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study discusses the application of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in thesis guidance communication between lecturers and post-graduate of Lampung University via WhatsApp as well as e-mail. This study found that the lecturers and the students used four types of politeness strategies in their interactions in thesis guidance through virtual communication, such as bald-on record politeness, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness. According to this study, baldness is the most preferred politeness strategy. The lecturers were polite; this strategy gives lecturers more power than students. The students greeted with positive politeness; the students recognized their inferiority to the lecturer. In thesis guidance, they tried to respect their lecturers.

It can be concluded that the data obtained are still restricted to the analysis of the data that needs to be explored. Therefore, in the future, other researchers are expected to investigate the significance of using politeness strategies at the university level using data and method that are more comprehensive. The exposure to data and the outcomes of analysis can play a role in the issue of politeness that arises in the EFL setting.

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