

POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN *FREEDOM WRITERS* MOVIE

Nita Kristyaningsih¹, Adip Arifin²

^{1,2}STKIP PGRI Ponorogo

tnita677@gmail.com

Received: 16 July 2022, **Revised:** 28 August 2022, **Accepted:** 24 September 2022

Abstract

The success of communication is influenced by various factors, one of them is politeness. Politeness is a key means by which humans work out and maintain interpersonal relationships. Therefore, politeness strategies must be applied in humans' life contexts, included in interaction between teacher and students in the learning process. In the *Freedom Writers* movie, there are politeness strategies that are used by Erin Gruwell, a teacher, to their students. This research is aimed at describing Erin's politeness strategies to her students in the classroom and its effects to social intercourse. The researcher uses politeness theory by Brown and Levinson to analyze Erin's politeness with descriptive qualitative research. Steps to collect the data with watched the movie and noting down all the relevant information. The result shows Erin Gruwell uses all politeness strategies, i.e. bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. The effects Erin's politeness strategies is showed by occur well communication between Erin and hers students. So, the cooperation in the learning process successfully.

Keywords: Movie; Politeness Strategies; Pragmatics

Abstrak

Keberhasilan komunikasi dipengaruhi berbagai factor, salah satunya adalah kesantunan berbahasa. Kesantunan merupakan sarana penting dalam menjaga hubungan interpersonal dengan orang lain. Strategi kesantunan berbahasa hendaknya diterapkan dalam berbagai konteks kehidupan, termasuk dalam hal interaksi antara guru dan murid-murid dalam proses pembelajaran. Di dalam film *Freedom Writers*, terdapat strategi kesantunan yang dilakukan oleh Erin Gruwell, seorang guru, kepada murid-muridnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kesantunan Erin kepada murid-muridnya di dalam kelas dan pengaruh kesantunan tersebut dalam pergaulan sosial. Peneliti menggunakan teori kesantunan berbahasa Brown dan Levinson untuk menjelaskan kesantunan Erin dengan menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif. Langkah-langkah dalam mengumpulkan data dengan cara mencermati film dan mencatat semua informasi yang relevan dengan penelitian ini. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Erin Gruwell menggunakan semua teori kesantunan yang meliputi: tanpa basa-basi, kesantunan positif, kesantunan negatif dan tersamar. Pengaruh strategi kesantunan Erin ditunjukkan dengan terjalannya komunikasi yang baik antara Erin dan murid-muridnya. Sehingga kerjasama dalam proses pembelajaran dapat berhasil.

Kata kunci: Film; Strategi Kesopanan; Pragmatik

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the ways to maintain social relationship among people within a particular society (see Artalisananda et al, 2021; Kartika et al, 2020; Arifin, 2018). It helps people to share ideas, feeling, evaluation, opinion, and conclusion. People communicate to convey meaning for others. In order to convey the meaning, people may use both spoken and unspoken forms. Torcky (2006:30) said that speaking is defined as an interaction process of constructing meaning that involved producing, receiving and processing information. The form and meaning of communication are highly dependent on the situational context in which it occurs, the participant involved, and the objectives of speaking. In the same time, intonation, gestures, and mimics become the supporting and even the alternative strategies how speakers convey meaning (see Prastyaningsih & Harida, 2021; Harida, 2016; Arifin, 2015). It's also related with society because with utterances, gestures, and languages will determine people view to someone.

Sociolinguistics is a term that refers to the study of the relationship between language and society, and how language is used in multilingual speech communities (Holmes, 2013:1). According to Wardhaugh, (2010:7), sociolinguistics is still clearly unified through its concern with how people use language to create and express identities, relate to one another in groups, and seek to resist, protect, or increase various kinds of power.

In society, people have related with politeness because it enables them to arrange and maintain social behavior or etiquette. Politeness as a fixed concept, as in idea of polite social behavior or etiquette, within a culture (Yule, 2010: 60). Politeness is not as simple as saying "please" or "excuse me" in anywhere.

According to Eelen, politeness as a lay person's concept, something that individuals talk about in everyday situation and have an everyday understanding of (Leech, 2014: 41). Politeness is a key means by which humans work out and maintain interpersonal relationships (see Nugroho et al, 2021; Suprayitno et al, 2019; Setiawan & Rois, 2017). Yule said that it is possible to treat politeness as a fixed concept, as in the idea of 'polite social behavior' or etiquette, within a culture (1996:60). Many of us have been educated how to behave politely since childhood; we only have to think about parents prescribing to their children when and how to apologies, to say "please" and "thank you" (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 1).

Politeness can be used to help the students in identifying other language speakers' cultural background. So, the students know and do the good attitudes if they live in other country. Therefore, the researcher is interested in investigating politeness phenomenon. The other country culture is drew in the movie. The researcher chooses *Freedom Writers* movie because in this movie there are politeness strategies that are identifiable, especially politeness strategies used by Erin Gruwell. The study purposes to find out Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies used by Erin Gruwell character of *Freedom Writers* movie and the effects of Erin Gruwell politeness in social intercourse.

According to Brown & Levinson (in Meyerhoff, 2015:84), politeness is important to realize that both a deferential responses and a joking responses. Most people associate 'politeness' just with ways of speaking that avoid causing offence by showing defence to another person. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) classifies four strategies: (a) to follow what it says, bald on record, (b) perform speech acts using Positive politeness (refers to the positive face), (c)

perform speech acts using Negative politeness (refers to the face of a negative), (d) indirect speech act or off the record (Senowarsito, 2013:5).

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), bald on-record strategy provides no effort being done by the speakers to minimize the impact of the FTA's. The speakers usually shock the hearers, or to embarrass them or to make them feel a bit uncomfortable. Positive politeness is an action to show the solidarity towards others, that is how to make the hearer feel good or to make him feel that his value is shared. Negative politeness is also known as respect politeness where every participant in the social process has the need not to be disturbed and to be free. Negative politeness as pays people respect and avoids intruding on them. It means that negative politeness expressed oneself appropriately in term of social distance and respecting status differences. Off record strategy has the main purpose of taking some pressures off of the hearer. In this case, the speaker performs an act in a vague manner that could be interpreted by the hearer as some other acts (Yasani et al, 2015:6).

METHOD

The researchers employ descriptive qualitative design because this present study describes an event in people's activities. Qualitative research concerns with developing explanations of social phenomena. That is to say, it aims to help people to understand the social world in which we live and why things are the way they are (Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge, 2007:7). According to Flick (2009:39), qualitative research is oriented towards analyzing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity and starting from people's expression and activities in

their local contexts. Therefore, qualitative research is in a position to design ways for social sciences, psychology, and other fields.

Researcher describes the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson theory that used Erin Gruwell character in *Freedom Writers* movie include positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record and off record. Then, the researcher describes the effects of Erin Gruwell politeness in the social intercourse. To collect the data, the researcher uses documentation method. It is done by taking the data related to the research of politeness strategies. The analysis method is descriptive analysis refers to the conversation conducted by the character's conversation in the *Freedom Writers* movie.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Politeness Strategies

The main character of *Freedom Writers* movie (Erin Gruwell) shows four Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies. Those are Bald-On Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record. The main character utterances concerning politeness are all analyzed based on Brown and Levinson's politeness (1987). The following list presents the politeness strategies of *Freedom Writers* movie.

Bald-On Record Strategies

Bald-On Record strategy was applied by the main character of *Freedom Writers* movie, Erin Gruwell. In the first scene of her classroom action, Erin always give welcome utterances to her students. She wants to make close relationship to her students. After she enter the classroom she says "hello or hi" to them. Welcome utterances is conclusion of Bald-On Record Strategy in politeness strategies.

Data 1:

Erin : “Hello”. “Hello”

Students : (not respond)

Jamal : “Hey, yo, let’s sit right here, man”.

Erin : “Hi”. (To Eva)

Eva : (not respond)

Erin : (smile)

Students : (noisy and make grouping in the classroom)

Bald-On Record strategy was applied by Erin in offer form utterances to her students in the first scene of her classroom action. When her student (Eva) wants to go to toilet, and she wants Eva to take card although Eva cuts her utterance before she finishes her speaks. In this scene also she wants to ask help when happen disturbance in the classroom.

Erin : “Eiva Benitez”

Eva : “Eva, not Eiva”

Erin : “Eva”

Eva : “I have to go to the bathroom”

Erin : “Okay, make sure that you take a.....”

Eva : “Yeah, I know” (take a card)

Classroom become noisy and happen disturbance because the students do gibing with the others. So, she ask to help in out of the classroom.

Erin : “Excuse me, may I please get some help in here?”

In the third scene of Erins’ classroom action when noisy in the classroom, Erin ask the students to be silent and try to solve problem about Sindys’ bag with ask to Jamal gives back Sindy’s bag. She also ask the students to sit down in their seat self. She can ask students for it because she has authority in the classroom as a teacher. Erin also shows great urgency to calm her students when disturbance happen with ask her students to sit down. All of Erin action is Bald-On Record in offer form.

Students : (noisy)

Erin : “Quietly, Please”

Sindy : “Mrs. Gruwell, he just took my damn bag!”

Jamal : “Shut up!”

“Ain’t, nobody touched your damn bag.”

Sindy : “Yeah, I saw you.”

Erin : “Jamal, Jamal Get her back pack.”

Jamal : “I didn’t do anything do nothing anyway.”

Erin : “Okay.”

In the out of classroom happen gangster disturbance and the students one by one out from classroom.

Erin : “Wait! Wait!, please, stay in yours seat!”

In the fourth classroom action, Erin ask hers students to listen the music and complete the lyric. She also do Bald-On Record strategy because do offer to her students to do something.

Erin : “I have this idea. We’ are gonna be covering poetry. Who here like Tupac Shakur? 2pac Shakur. It’s 2pac. Excuse me, raise your hands! Really? I though there is be more fans. I have the lyric to this song printed out. I want to you to listen to the phrase. I have up on the board. It’s an example of a internal rhyme. What he does is very sophisticated and cool, actually”.

Positive Politeness Strategies

In the scenes 00.10.21 – 00.10.23, Erin Gruwell say “okay” to Eva, when Eva wants to go to toilet and she gives permission to Eva. It concludes Positive Politeness because Erin give satisfied dialogue with agreement form to Eva.

Erin : “Eiva Benitez”
 Eva : “Eva, not Eiva”
 Erin : “Eva”
 Eva : “I have to go to the bathroom”
 Erin : “Okay, make sure that you take a.....”
 Eva : “Yeah, I know” (take a card)

In the all of classroom scenes, Erin always give answer “yes or okay” to what students do if it useful for them. Its’ includes Positive Politeness because she always respect in all her students actions.

Erin makes students satisfy in the classroom with her optimism and agreement. She also give compliment to the students though her students impolite to her. Besides she gives compliment and agreement, Erin also makes joke in the classroom.

In minutes 00.14.34 – 00.14.36, Erin jokes with her students when explain Homer Simpson, she doesn’t blame or angry to students answer whereas it mistakenly. Joke is one of Positive Politeness Strategies form because make hearers satisfied. Erin jokes because she wants hers students attention for hers and she can explain lesson clearly.

Erin : “Let’s go over the first name on the list, Homer. Homer’s the Odyssey.”

Marcus : “I know Homers the Simpson’

Students : (laugh)

Erin : “No, this Homer was an ancient Greak, but maybe he was bald just like Homer Simpson”. (Laughs)

Compliment is also part of politeness strategies. When Erin do creative activity as game in the classroom, she gives compliment and optimism with say “Nice try, nice try”. It makes students confidence to do something and game which Erin gives successfully. It happens in scene 00.43.23.

Erin : “How many of you are gang members?”

Students : (walk to the line and back)

Erin : “Nice try, nice try. Okay, that was a stupid question, wasn’t it?”

Students : “Yeah.”

Erin : “You’re not allowed gang affiliations in school. I apologize for ask. My badness.”

Negative Politeness Strategies

Erin Gruwell as main character almost don’t do Negative Politeness when she is in the classroom with her students. She is relax and know what students need in the classroom. She avoids formality that make far distance between teacher and students. In the researcher observation, Erin do Negative Politeness in the scene 00.14.30 when she refuses Marcus answer about Homer. It belong to Negative Politeness because with refuse is same means with don’t assume people wants.

Erin : “Let’s go over the first name on the list, Homer. Homer’s the Odyssey.”

Marcus : “I know Homers the Simpson’

Students : (laugh)

Erin : “No, this Homer was an ancient Greak, but maybe he was bald just like Homer Simpson”. (Laughs)

Off Record Strategies

Erin Gruwell do Off Record in the minutes 00.20.14, Erin ask students to listen 2pac Shaker song. She wants to know that many students become 2pac lover but only few students raise hand when she ask about it. But, when she ask “Really? I though there is be more fans” and then almost of students in the classroom raise hand. She do Off Record with say it because there are implicit meaning with her question that must students interpret.

In the minutes 00.28.21, Erin makes Off Record to her student named Gloria Munez with this conversations,

Erin : "All right. Gloria. Please read the first sentences on the board."

Gloria : "Why me?"

Erin : "Because I know how much you love to read. Close the Magazine!"

Gloria : "Odysseus had no sense of deletions".

Erin : "Now, none of the sentences are correct. I'd like you to rewrite the sentences using the proper tenses and spelling on page four of your workbook."

Erin says that because she knows Gloria lazy to read lesson book but only reads magazine. Erin uses words "Because I know how much you love to read" to tease Gloria so that she interpreters about her reading habits. In the Erin's sentences there are close meaning that must interpreted by hearers themeself. It conclude Politeness strategy as Off Record form.

The Effects of Politeness Strategies

Bald-On Record Strategies

Erin Gruwell is a teacher in this classroom. So, she has territory in that place because she must learn students in the classroom. Erin uses Bald-On Record strategies to give attention to the students. She uses this politeness strategies in welcome, offer and great urgency forms. The effect of this politeness strategies to Erin is she always try to become close friends with students in the classroom although they always not respect to Erin done.

Although her students do not respect her, Erin always try to give attention to welcome to students. She always makes students comfortable with her. She also shows great

urgency when disturbance happen in the school. She keeps students so that unchanged in classroom when disturbance happen. She doesn't want her students get accident. She always ask the students so that they do not discriminate to others students, especially in skin color and ethnic.

Positive Politeness Strategies

The effect of Erin's Positive Politeness Strategies makes her students love her in the last scene. Erin always optimist and give compliment to what students do. It makes her student confidence. Erin also makes joke in the classroom so that happens relationship between her and students relax.

Erin always gives examples to her students with do Positive Politeness in the classroom. Erin hopes the students leave violence in the gangsters and they don't discriminate about ethnic and skin color. She always gives rewards toward goodness student although only compliment.

Negative Politeness Strategies

Erin do Negative Politeness Strategies when she refuses Marcus answer with say "No", this Homer was an ancient Greek ...". It makes the students think and embitterer about what Erin has explained. Students need to have various opinion to answer Erin's question. After Erin say "No" to Marcus answer, certainly it makes Marcus shock because his answer is wrong. It is effect of Negative Politeness from Erin with makes Marcus shock with her answer.

Off Record Strategies

Erin did Off Record strategy to Gloria with saying "because I know how much you love to read", in that utterances there are implicit meaning and makes Gloria must interpret toward Erin say about her. She has done mistake with what she do in the classroom. She

doesn't read lesson but only read magazines. Off Record Politeness strategies make Erin uses calm languages without embitters her student with direct in saying. It also makes her students can think themselves with what Erin means.

CONCLUSION

Erin Gruwell applies all Brown & Levinson's Politeness Strategies in the classroom. Those are Bald-On Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record. She applies Bald-On Record Strategies in offer, welcome, and great urgency forms. She can become close friends to her students and they also love her although she has authority in there. Erin applies Positive Politeness in agreement, compliments, and jokes forms. Her utterances make students satisfied and built their confidences. Erin applies Negative Politeness with don't assume people wants. It is when she refuses her students answer. Erin applies Off-Record when she doesn't say direct address about what she say so that her students must interpret the meaning themselves. The effects Erin's politeness strategies is showed by occur well communication between Erin and hers students. It is proven by hers students listen her advices and their motivation to study can improve. So, the cooperation in the learning process successfully.

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