

## POLITENESS STRATEGIES CONVEYED BY THE STUDENTS IN ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

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### ABSTRACT

The present research is inevitable revealing the politeness strategies conveyed by the students of English study program at Jambi University through online discussions. The data of the research are utterances of the research subjects (students) obtained from the students' *Whatsapp chat histories* in Literature for Educational Purposes and Teaching English for Young Learners courses all through the classroom interactions. The technique of collecting the data is accomplished by means of reviewing the students' chats as the consequence of online classes during the period of Covid-19. Every single word obtained from the students' chats has been read conversely not all of the utterances are regarded as the data (data reduction process). The results of this research highlight four genres of politeness strategies, namely *positive* politeness, *negative* politeness, *bald* on record, and *off* record. Briefly, the cultural issue entirely have the aftermath on the politeness strategies realized by the research subjects.

**Keywords:** *Politeness Strategy, English Students, Online Discussions*

### INTRODUCTION

People use languages to communicate with each other because language is a tool of communication. In order to build a good communication, people need to consider many aspects and one of the most important aspects is politeness. Politeness is very important in building good communication because it is essential for making someone's position appropriate and safe in a particular situation. Notwithstanding, not all people are able to implement the politeness strategies and one of them is the student. This case is caused by the lack of understanding in behaving linguistically. According to Wardhono (2013), many English learners are not aware of Pragmatics. In other words, they do not know how words and phrases are used with special meanings in different situations or they are lack of pragmatic competence. According to Leech (2014), pragmatic competence, as a major part of linguistic competence, is not a one piece. It includes two related types of capability which can be called *pragmalinguistic competence* and *sociopragmatic competence*. As language learners, accuracy and appropriacy are fundamental endowments because we are not only demanded to be grammatically fluent but also be culturally and socially flourishing speakers. That was the reason for the researcher to include students of English Study Program at Jambi University as the subject of the research.

Politeness theories have been proposed by several experts, one of them is Grice (1975). He has categorized four expectations to be used by English speakers in expressing something in a conversation. These expectations have been known as conversation maxims which work together with the common principle that he has claimed as the Cooperative Principles. Then, Lakoff (1973, as cited in Hsieh, 2009) has categorized politeness as a device

that is used to reduce friction in interpersonal interaction. In addition, Leech (1983) also has stated that politeness is referred as a persistence aspect in communication and a key determination of why people deliver meaning implicitly. His theory has been known as Politeness Principles. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987) have defined that politeness is used as the way to convey the utterances as polite as possible to minimize conflict with others.

## LITERARY REVIEW

Based on the definitions of politeness previously described, the researchers select the definition from Brown and Levinson (1987) hence its theory is a universal politeness notion. They have arranged and systematized the politeness theory based on their observation and expand from research of 'face' that is introduced by Goffman (1967). Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness notion also concerns on the varieties in the linguistic strategies used by people from different language backgrounds, contexts, and situations. They have divided the strategies in terms of four main strategies of politeness namely positive politeness, negative politeness, off record, and Bald on Record. According to them, politeness strategies are developed for the purpose of saving hearer's face. In this context, the face is defined as the public self-image. This image could be damaged, maintained, or enhanced through interaction with others (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Thus, if someone wants to make good communication, he or she should pay attention to the strategy of politeness. Therefore, the researcher used their theory of politeness as the foundation for this research literature.

Several studies on politeness have been conducted by many researchers. First, Wardhono (2013) investigated politeness strategies in SMS exchange between English Study Program students and lecturer in UNIROW Tuban. The results of the study explained that there are four strategies in students' SMS and negative politeness strategy is the dominant strategy that is used by the students. Second, a research in 2016 also digged on students' politeness strategies in text messaging. The research conducted by Shahrzad Eshghirejad and M. Raouf Moini (2016) and was attempted to describe the strategies used by female and male students and find out the significant differences. The study found that the participants (Iranian EFL learners at the University of Kashan, Iran), have applied politeness strategies in texting their teachers. Since that research emphasized on the relationship between gender and text messages with respect to using positive and negative politeness strategies, that was found that female preferred to use negative politeness strategies more than male. Third, in 2018, a research about politeness strategies in Whatsapp text messaging between Sundanese students and lecturers was conducted by Farida and Yuliana (2018). The study revealed that the students used all of the four strategies with negative politeness strategy as the most frequently used strategy and Bald on Record as the least frequent one. Fourth, closely related to the previous one, a research in 2019 written by Mulyono et al., (2019) was also exploring students' politeness strategies in teacher- student Whatsapp. The result showed that students employed more politeness strategies than their teachers. Last year, a research about students' politeness strategies in texting a lecturer was done by Rahmi (2020). The findings showed that most of the students used Bald on Record strategy in texting their advisor and only one message showed the used of Off Record strategy. Then, several text showed that some students used Negative Politeness by considering the status, time and the used of apology for interrupting the lecturers. In addition, Positive Politeness was also found in the students' text messages to their lecturers.

This research has similar type with the previous studies. It is also about students' politeness strategies in online communication. Then the similarity also can be seen from the used of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theories. Beside the similarities, the difference can be seen from the focus of the research. The previous studies focused on analyzing students' or teachers' or both politeness strategies in individual chat. Meanwhile, this research will be about analyzing students' politeness strategies in Whatsapp application as a tool for teaching and learning process.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative research specifically ethnolinguistics was designed to analyzed the politeness strategies used by the students of English Study Program at Jambi University in the online discussions based on the theory of politeness from Brown and Levinson (1987). The data were taken from the students' Whatsapp chat history. The students were the students of R001 class 2017 in the Literature for Educational Purpose and Teaching English for Young Lernas subjects. For ethical purpose, all of the students' names were referred to using pseudonyms in this research. In addition, the researcher used documentation method to obtain the data. Since it was a qualitative research, the researcher was the primary instrument helped by her phone and computer to collect the data, classify, and analyze. Moreover, the researcher implied the interactive model from Miles et al., (2014) in analyzing the data. The data analysis includes data condensation, data display, then drawing and verifying conclusions. The main proses were indentification and categorization. In identification proces, the parts of text messages containing politeness strategies were identified. Then, categorization proces involved categorising the text messages based on the sub-strategies for each politeness strategies. The results were interpreted to draw the conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research revealed that the students used the four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) namely negative politeness, positive politeness, bald on record, and of record with positive politeness as the dominant strategy.

### *Positive Politeness*

As what Brown and Levinson (1987) said, positive politeness is purposed to satisfy H's positive face. The realization of this strategy is widely found in the interaction between intimate because positive politeness utterances are used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy (Brown and Levinson 1987). Therefore, it's in keeping with the theory that the researcher found positive politeness as the most used strategy because most of the students' interaction was mostly among students rather than students to lecturers. This strategy involve three broad mechanism, namely claiming common ground, conveying that S and H are cooperators, and fulfilling H's want.

### **Claim common ground**

The indication of claiming common ground to H is S and H are persons who have same wants. One way of making this claim is by **noticing or attending to H's interest, want, need or good**. This strategy suggest S to take notice of H's condition. It includes noticing H's changes, possessions, and anything that H want S to notice and approve. The

extract 1 below contains the use of this strategy in the online discussion that was found the by researcher.

#### Excerpt 1

S1 : From my point of view, presentation from this group is awesome. *It seems like you have prepared everything well. From the materials and the vidio presentation. Additionally, your voices are clear enough. I didn't need to play the video in full volume.* 😊

Giving compliments such as ‘*presentation from this group is awesome*’ and ‘*your voices are clear enough*’ show that S1 attended to H’s want as being a good presenters. Then, S1 confirmed H’s positive face by noticing H’s hard work. It showed by saying ‘*seems like you have prepared everything well*’. Those are S1’s strategies to satisfy H’s positive face.

The second strategy for claiming common ground is by **exaggeration (interest, approval, sympathy with H)**. The researcher found the students used the expression of ‘*do*’ for agreement exaggeration such as ‘*I do agree...*’. Then, exaggeration also used in giving compliment. For example, including expressions of like such as ‘*really*’ and ‘*very*’ like the untturance in excerpt 2 below.

#### Excerpt 2

S8 : I want to give a comment to your video presentation. The background that you are using is **very** interesting and creative. But, . . . to hear clearly what the presenter is saying.

Then, **use in-group identity markers** strategy are used oftenly in the discussion. There are several utterances that show the utilization of this strategy in the discussion. The students used ‘*guys*’ and ‘*sis*’ as the adress form to their friends for showing in-group membership. Then, several slang languages such as ‘*LOL*’ for *Laughing Out Loud* , ‘*CMIW*’ for *Correct Me If I am Wrong*, ‘*salfok*’ is *Salah Fokus* or *miss focus* , ‘*btw*’ means *by the way* and ‘*OMG*’ means *Oh My God* are used for showing in-group shared knowledge. For instance,

#### Excerpt 3

S29 :*lolokay* i see

So, S assumes that H understand the terms. Moreover, use in-group identity markers is defined by the use of contraction and ellipsis for nicknames and question. For example, the researcher found ‘*deb*’ for Debby, ‘*ja*’ for Puja, ‘*cak*’ for Resya and many others. Then, ellipsis in question like the example below was also found in the discussion.

#### Excerpt 4

S13 : *get the point?*

In that case, S13 used contraction for her question where actually that should be ‘do you get the point?’ in order to be grammatically correct. However, S13 did not do that because the intelocutor was her friend. So, using contraction was just fine and even sounds

more friendly. These in-group usages of address form, slang language, ellipsis, and nicknames are used by the students to show a membership for a class discourse. So, H's positive face for being included as the member can be approved.

In addition, another characteristic way of claiming common ground with H that found in the discussion is to **Seek agreement** or seek ways in which it is possible to agree. To do this, S can raise '**safe topics**'. The researcher found that students of R-001 implemented this strategy by giving additional supportive idea to their friends' opinion. See the example in the extract below.

**Excerpt 5**

- S10 : Even if the students in no 1, is very tired, using literature somewhat can entertain them
- S28 : i agree with resya's opinion, *we can use poem and short stories*

In the conversation, there is S28 who used the strategy of seeking agreement by corroborating others' argument. S28 tried to satisfy S10's desire (positive face) to be right by corroborating S10's idea. For that reason, she gave the example of what literature that can entertain students. Those the example thereby can safe the topic from disagreement.

Beside that, to maintain the relationship and claiming common ground, S can hide the disagreement using **avoid disagreement** strategy. In the class discussion, the researcher found that the students' used **token agreement** as the desire to appear to agree with H. The extract below contains one of the example of the utilization of this strategy in the class discussion.

**Excerpt 6**

- S10 : Isn't it too soon to give the activity to Jhs and Shs students?. Since the activity is for advanced level...
- S29 : *you're right S10 but* i think its acceptable to give this activity to shs and jhs as long as the teacher provide appropriate material for their level

As it is provided in the bold and utilized utterance, S29 tried to appear agreeing to S10 while actually she was not. It's seen from her respond with '*you're right resya, but.....*' rather than '*no, ...*'. Then, she carried on her own opinion which was completely different or contrary to S10's.

Other than that, there is also the used of **pseudo-agreement** in class discussion. This strategy was used by S9 as the moderator of the discussion at that time. Below is the extract.

**Excerpt 7**

- S9 : Let me answer Hezy' question *then*.

In this case, '*then*' was used as the conclusory marker where "*then*" pointed to a conclusion of an agreement between S and H. Eventhough there was no explicit agreement, the S tried to make a fake agreement so that it will be called as cooperative agreement. It is in line with the theory from Brown and Levinson (1987), they said "*then* and *so* are often used where there is in fact no prior agreements: but pointing to a fake prior agreement they call upon the cooperative agreement associations" (p. 115). S9 decided to used this strategy

because there was no respond from her friends. As a moderator she had to run the discussion and couldn't let the discussion stuck. Therefore, the silent from her friends made her to pseudo the agreement and pressured the addressee to accept.

### Convey that S and H are cooperators

The second major mechanism in positive politeness strategies derives from the want to convey that speaker and addressee are cooperatively involve in the related activity. First, S might stress the cooperation by indicating his knowledge of and sensitivity to H's wants. This is the output of **assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants** strategy. The researcher found the use of this strategy in the R-001's online classroom discussion below.

#### Excerpt 8

S13 : *i know you have so many questions*. just tell us:)

From the excerpt previously, we can conclude that S13 as the presenters had presupposed her knowledge of and considered for H's wants (positive face). As the presenters, she tried to presuppose that H's want was asking questions. Therefore, it is classified as the strategy of presupposing S's knowledge for H's business.

Second, to stress the cooperation S may claim that H's wants are also his/her wants by demonstrating a good intentions to satisfy H's positive face wants. To demonstrate a good intention, S can give **offers and promises**. This strategy was used by the students as it is shown in the extract below.

#### Excerpt 9

S4 : thank you a lot indri for your comment and suggestion.  
thats great suggest and I just realized with that mistake. *I will immediately add about the point that you mentioned*😊

At that moment, the lecturer asked every students to comment their friends' homeworks randomly. One of the comments came from S28 to S4's work. Derives from the bold and utilized utterance, it is seen that S4 tried to stress her cooperation with S28. She promised to immediately add the points that S28 has said to her work. Moreover, her promise also her desire to satisfy S28's positive face as having good, objective, and accepted comments.

The third strategy to stress cooperation is by using **be optimistic** strategy. In this case, S uses presumptuous or optimistic expression. The reseracher found that the students used this strategy when delivering their ideas. For example the utterance employed by S10 below.

#### Excerpt 10

S10 : There are various literature, which r shorter and simpler.(i.e poetry, poem). Using one Literature will not consume all of their time, *right?*  
What we actually need to consider is about what approach will be suitable to their condition

The word '*right*' is explicetely indicate that S was optimis with her idea. This optimism gave assumption for S that H will cooperate with her because this strategy made

H assumes that her ideas was their mutual shared interest. Indirectly, this is also the strategy for **intensifying interest to H** because it pulls H into the middle of the discussion.

Then, using inclusive “we” form when S really means ‘you’ or ‘me’ is the implication of **include both S and Hin the activity** strategy. The researcher found the manifestation of this strategy. For example:

#### Excerpt 11

S19 : okey class, *let's we start our discussion* . if you have any comment or questions related to our topic. PLease

‘let’s’ in English is used as an inclusive ‘we’ form while actually the one who wanted to start the discussion was S19 as the moderator. Also, it can be in the following way as employed by S10:

#### Excerpt 12

S10 : Since all questions have been answered. *We* close the question session and move to comment section..

When the literal meaning was actually ‘*I will close the question session and move to comment section*’ . Because the only one who could manage the discussion was only her as the moderator.

#### Fulfill H’s want for some X

To fulfill H’s wants, S may use the **give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)** strategy. The researcher found the used of thanking to express S desire to satisfy H’s positive face as being liked and seen as a kind person. The students did that in the following way:

#### Excerpt 13

S19 : *thank you resya, Novia and puja*. please give me some minutes to ..... (*moderator to questioner*)

#### Excerpt 14

S4 : See you mam and *thank you for today mam*☺(*student to lecturer*)

#### Negative Politeness

The second most used strategy is negative politeness. Negative politeness is the politeness strategy that mainly adress to redress on the negative face of the adsee. The students used negative politeness strategy for some purposes namely be direct, don’t presume or assume, don’t coerce H, and Communicate S’s want to not impinge on H.

#### Be direct

The problem for enjoin two principles, namely being direct but don’t coerce H can be solved by compromising conventional indirectness. **Be conventionally indirect** strategy enable us to use phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings but different from their litteral meanings. Then, the most significant form of

conventional indirectness is indirect speech acts. The researcher found the used of indirect speech acts by the students like in the following extract.

**Excerpt 15**

S27 : *Can I answer this mam?*  
LECTURER : sure, Nama

At that moment, S27 asked for a permission to her lecturer to answer a question from one of her friends. Eventhough the sentence was interrogative, the meaning was not S27's ability in answering the question. In this context, S27's sentence is categorized as conventional indirectness because she used interrogative to make a request and there was no ambiguous meaning . It can be seen from the lecturer as the interlocutor which could understand the function of the sentence directly by letting her student's instead of saying about ability.

Beside in the form of question, conventional indirectness also could be delivered through other form. For example, using assertive to make a request like in the utterances uttered by S10 below.

**Excerpt 16**

S10 : *I have a question regarding the phonics*  
S19 : yes, resya you may

This strategy was oftenly used by the students because they did not want to mess up the discussion (saving others' negative face) and therefore asking permission was the polite way before delivering argument.

**Don't presume/ assume**

One way of doing that is by using **Question and hedge** strategy. The reearcher found this strategy in the class discussion. For example, the utterance from S17 below.

**Excerpt 17**

S10 : Salimah, if that's ok perhaps u canshare your thoughts  
through voice note Seems like it takes time to type it 😊  
S17 : I *guess* it would be more convenient than typing

S17 used the hedge '*guess*' to not presume that the interlocutor have the same idea or agree to his suggestion. In this case, he was agreeing S10's idea and the interlocutor was Salimah. There, the hedge '*guess*' was used to weaken the imperative form of his suggestion. This strategy showed that S17 avoided to assume that Salimah was able or willing to do his suggestion. In the formal context like a class discussion, giving suggestion in the imperative form like '*you must use voice note*' seems rude and potentially give a big FTA to hearer. Therefore, S17's strategy was considered polite and can be accepted to be heard by others in that classroom.

**Don't coerce H**

One of the way to manifest this strategy is using **be pessimistic** strategy. Beside using question like conventional indirect question previously, this strategy can be manifested using pessimistic hedge. We can see the usage of this strategy in the discussion from the following excerpt.



### Excerpt 18

S10 : Salimah, if that's ok *perhaps* u canshare your thoughts through voice note Seems like it takes time to type it 😊

From the excerpt above, S10's intended meaning was asking Salimah to use voice note. But, she did not want to coerce Salimah and assuming that Salimah was not like to follow her suggestion by using pessimistic hedge '*perhaps*'. The interlocutor will get it rude if she convey it really direct like '*share your thoughts through voice note*'. Therefore, to minimize the FTA and consider Salimah negative face, the use of pessimistic hedge was appropriate.

The second strategy to don't really coerce H is by using **minimize the imposition, R<sub>x</sub>** strategy like in the next excerpt.

### Excerpt 19

S23 : I just want to give *a little bit* comment about your PPT, first of all your design is good .... presentation video.

From the quotation, S23 wanted to minimize the imposition of her suggestion by using the expression that minimize R<sub>x</sub> which is '*a little bit*'. This expressions is just the same with *a tiny* and *a bit* that mean *only*. So, there, she wanted to convey to the interlocutor as if her comment were few, not really important, and that did not take a long time to be conveyed in that situation, where everyone wants to give comments in the limited time, implementing this strategy is nice to protect H's negative face and minimizing FTA.

### Communicate S's want to not impinge on H

The most obvious strategy to do this is by using **apologize** strategy. According to Leech (2014), there are two classification of apology strategies, namely **head acts** and **supportive moves**. The researcher found this usage in the discussion. This indicates S reluctance to impinge on H's negative face and includes redressing the impingement. Most students used '*sorry*' as the head acts of the reexpression of regret. For example:

### Excerpt 20

S15 : *Sorry* i'm late mam

Then, there are also some other students who add the supportive moves by giving reason and taking on responsibility like the utterance from Resya in the following excerpt.

### Excerpt 21

S4 : Assalamualaikum mam. I am *sorrycoming late*, mam. Because *i have something problem with my phone*. I am Wangsa (RRA1B217002).

From the previous excerpt, S4 was admitting her fault by saying her late response and accepting the blame. Then, she also gave the explanation by conveying her reason.

Moreover, according to Brown and Levinson (1987) "one way of indicating that S doesn't want to impinge on H is to phrase the FTA as if the agent were other than S, or at least possibly not S or not S alone, and the addressee were other than H, or only inclusive of H" (p. 190). This is categorized as the **impersonalize S and H**. The researcher found that

the students used passive to remove reference to both S and H. For example, like the utterance in the online discussion uttered by S2 below.

### Excerpt 22

S2 : in my point of view, the slides look really interesting.  
however, it's a bit hard for me to understand. then, I agree  
with mella, ***the duration is too long*** and ***too many text  
have to be read.***

The used of passive intended to delete the agent and avoid reference to persons involved in the FTA. The bold and utilized utterance means 'your video duration is too long' and 'I have to read too many text'. Therefore, In order to avoid explicit blaming, S2 used this passive trick. Beside passive, most of the students were found using address terms as 'you' avoidance to show politeness. For example, the used of *mam* and *ma'am* to their lecturer and *mbak* and *bang* to their seniors who also joining that class.

### Bald on Record

The next strategy that also found expressed by the students is bald on record. This type of strategy is performed directly, clearly, and unambiguously. Speakers apply this strategy in the situation where maximum efficiency is needed in communication. This strategy is also commonly found in people who know each other very well such as between close friends so that face redress is not required. In addition, the bald on record strategy also can be found in the situation where the speaker doesn't care about maintaining face because the speaker is powerful and his/ her want to satisfy the hearer's face is small.

The researcher found the same phenomena of Bald on Record usage in the online discussion like the utterances employed by S18 and S24 below.

### Excerpt 23

S18 : Not yet mom. Actually my question hasn't been answered 😊  
S24 : ***what's your*** Deb?  
S18 : ***Scroll up*** Deg 😊

In that meeting, Nisa's group was presenting their materials. In the group discussion, there was usually a session for question and answer. At that moment, the time showed that the class was almost had to be ended. So, the lecturer checked whether all the questions had been answered or not and there was S18's question that had not been answered yet. Then, S24 was going to try answering her question and asked her to repeat or resend the question while actually S18 had sent it in the beginning. Instead of repeating her question, S18 to baldly commanding or giving imperative to S24 to find the question herself by scrolling up the chat.

Both S18's and S24's utterances are the utilization of Bald on record strategies as being bald, direct, and unambiguous. From the utterances that have been bold and italicized, we also can see that both of them did not care about hearer's face and there was no desire to redress hearer's face. Those can be seen from the utterances that contain no hedge or additional word to soften the FTA. Then, asking the questions that actually had been shared showed that Degita did not care about S18's positive face for being listened and cared. Moreover, giving refusal by baldly giving imperative is actually a big FTA that

really threaten hearer's face. However, that is not a picture for impoliteness because both are friend. The friendship can be seen from the used of nicknames ('*deb*' and '*deg*'). Then, efficiency is more important than redressing hearer's face because the time was limited.

In addition, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), **granting permission for something that H has requested** could be baldly on record. Some of them are '*yes*', '*yes, you may...*', and '*okay, go ahead*'. Usually, a moderator of the discussion used this strategy for granting audiences' requests. Below is one of the picture as delivered by S21 as the moderator to Novia as the audience.

#### Excerpt 24

S9 : May I give additional comment for Salimah's question?  
S21 : *Yes, you may Novia.*

Beside that, Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that non-minimization face cases are likely to occur in farewell formulae expression. The researcher found that the students used this strategy when the classes were finish by saying '*stay at home*', '*stay safe*', and '*stay healthy*'.

#### Excerpt 25

S20 : Ok mam, *thankyou. Stay healthy* for you

That is the form of **sympathetic advices** or **warnings** for H to be careful because the Corona virus was dangerous and spreaded everywhere.

#### Cases of FTA-oriented bald on record usage

The above are the standard use of bald on record where speaker and hearer overrides face concerns. But, another use of bald on record is actually oriented to face. For example **offers**. In this circumstances it is polite for being baldly offers hearer in order to alleviate H's anxieties by pre-emptively offering her/his. In the class discussion, the researcher found the utilization of this strategy. This can be seen in the excerpt below.

#### Excerpt 26

S21 : Actually, puja's question is very interesting.  
*Come on guys*, do you have things in your mind? Or you *guys* agree with mella's answer?

In that meeting, S21 was the moderator and she tried to encourage her friend to engage on the discussion. As the moderator, she attempted to foresee what the other participant was attempting to foresee by giving offer. This was suitable to be utilized because her friend appeared to be silent and there were still enough time to discuss more. So, the risk was small.

Saying '*come on*' is indicated a bald on record imperative for H. This is utilized to forestall H's reluctance to impinge on S's negative face. This literal meaning is '*it is free to deliver your idea and don't worry about offending me*'. However, this strategy is not suitable for H who are more important than S. So, this is acceptable because S21 was offering her friends, not her lecturer.

### **Off Record**

Last, the least used politeness strategy is off record. Off record is simply described as indirect utterance. There are two ways to represent off record strategy, namely inviting conversational implicatures and be vague or ambiguous and both of them were found in the discussion.

#### **Invite conversational implicatures**

First, **give hints** strategy.

##### **Excerpt 27**

S19 : Assalamu'alikum mam.  
*I think it's over than 9 o'clock*

That hints were intended to the lecturer. S19 as the moderator had been waiting the lecturer to let her start the discussion because at the first time the lecturer said that the discussion would be started at 9 a.m. That hints leave the interlocutors to find out S19's intended meaning which was asking a permission by herself. Moreover, that clues also mean 'what are you doing mam, we are waiting' because that utterances demand a reason indeed.

Other than that, the use of **overstate** strategy as the violation of quantity maxim also found in the discussion. The students used overstate in the discussion to convey an apology like present in the extract below.

##### **Excerpt 28**

S1 : And for difa's response, I think it's quite similar with resya  
S14 : yes, salimah. *it took me a long time to type and didn't see resya's response first*

S14's utterances 'it took me a long time to type and didn't see resya's response first' could convey an excuse for being careless and repeating the same idea. Then, that also could convey an apology for what she had done.

The next form of off record strategy is the **use of rethorical question**. according to Nababan and Djatmika (2017), rhetorical questions are usually the same as real questions. The differences are on the intention. The readers or the hearers should know the context to indentify the question and the intended meanings. The researcher found the used of this strategies in the class discussion as pictured in the quotation below.

##### **Excerpt 30**

S10 : @S27 will answer your question 😊  
S13 : mine?  
S10 : Yess, sorry forgot to tag you hehe  
S13 : *why you always forget about me, resya?*

S10 as the moderator forgot to mention S13 as the questioner. So, everyone were confused which questione that would be answered by S27. Because of the confusion that she made, she asked for an apology to S13. S13's rethorical questioned were intended to show her anger and also complain because of being forgotten. However, that is not a harsh sarcasm. That's only a tiny anger and complain to decrease the level of seriousness.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research has discussed the politeness strategies used by the students in online discussions with the findings that the students have realized all the politeness strategies in the online discussions, namely: Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald on Record, and Off Record strategy. The research has successfully observed the ethnolinguistics of the research participants. Therefore, the researchers also conclude that politeness strategy is very wide. To sum up, many factors either from sociological factors or language competence of the persons in the class discussions, students very possible realize different politeness strategies in accordance to the context and their abilities to use the language variously and appropriately.

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