

# Off-Record Politeness Strategies Used by the EFL Teachers for Blended Classroom

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the politeness strategies used by teachers when teaching English in coeducational classrooms and the impact of these strategies on students. We focused on analyzing teachers' verbal perceptions of off-record politeness and explained the implications of politeness as found in two English lesson recordings. Researchers employed targeted selection and informative qualitative studies to obtain data. Data were collected through interviews and observations. Researchers transcribed the conversation and applied the theory of Brown and Levinson to analyze it. The subjects of this study were high school English teachers in South Sulawesi. Researchers observed classrooms by recording teacher activity and analyzing it using The theory of etiquette techniques by Brown and Levinson. Consequently, the effects on students in learning are motivation, student attitudes (emotional), respect for teachers, self-confidence, activity, participation in the teaching and learning process, and integrity.

Keywords: *Off record politeness, TEFL, Blended Classroom*

## INTRODUCTION

To generate productive classroom interactions, both students and educators rely on communication. Teachers and students use language to communicate in both verbal and nonverbal forms. Therefore, they must employ effective communication strategies to articulate their thoughts. Many studies have demonstrated that both students and educators need to use effective communication techniques in the classroom (Moazen, Kafipour, & Soori, 2016)

Teachers do things to others There are several methods you can use if you want to ask The first way is to say something, and the other way is to make a facial expression without saying anything. These two types of communication are known as the basis of communication strategies. Specifically, Salman & Beti (2020), as it is also perceived as a polite strategy. Both strategies are a result of people's tendency to fearlessly maintain their self-image. The first strategy is the most common and obvious. By saying something, people can easily express or express what they want to say. On the other hand, by saying nothing, people tend to use or apply certain gestures without even saying a word. In addition to the former strategy, people can formulate or express some intended utterances directly related to what they want to say. This scheme is known as an "on-record" strategy. When people say things that don't seem directly related to what they want to say, it means they are using covert strategies. I tend to use this strategy.

The most popular method or approach In English teaching methodology in recent years is called the 'communicative approach. As the name of this approach suggests, it emphasizes the learner's ability to communicate and the communication itself. Students usually learn languages so that they can communicate. Their goal is to be able to express all kinds of verbal acts, including requests and apologies, which are essential to the subject of politeness. Politeness is part of communication and therefore plays an important role in the language-learning process and in teaching English as a second language. Liyanage, I., Walker, T., Bartlett, B., and Guo, X. (2015) report the failure of coursebooks to address taboo language, as well as the effects of sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge. We have discovered that there are other barriers to development. In Classes, with English Teachers, I also found myself having to deal with my insecurities about how to do it. Since instructors are typically in charge of instructing L2, they must comprehend the meaning of what is being taught, even though textbooks and teacher materials for English reflect modern linguistic breakthroughs.

In some situations, it is important to use the words "please" and "thank you" as forms of politeness, but according to Fabio (2012), some countries do not have a universal model of politeness. So politeness does not depend solely on these words. He goes so far as to say that it is quite common for tourists to view the locals in foreign countries as being rude or impolite. As a result, he advises readers to be alert and cautious when meeting new people because there is no single definition of politeness, and if they ignore this fact, they risk drawing inaccurate conclusions. Even if it's a little stupid, individuals frequently anticipate speaking to each other in a somewhat oblique manner. Therefore, when communicating, people need a strategy of politeness to get a good response from the listener. He states that it means to speak, to understand the social values of society, and to understand aspects of form. Politeness strategies are an important factor in teaching language or communication because there are individual differences that teachers need to consider when teaching. For individual differences in students, teachers should control and select the best phrases or instructions in the classroom to avoid misunderstandings and misunderstandings among students. Therefore, the strategy should prioritize the communication of ideas and focus on the audience and the context in which the communication takes place.

Some scientists in Indonesia are interested in the study of civility in classroom interactions. One such as Mojo. (2021) research on politeness focused solely on learner demands as a way to express politeness but did not specifically examine potential strategies used by students in the classroom. did. The results show that the 10 Tondano Javanese used positive politeness methods in a language environment where the interlocutor was less than or equal to the speaker and the moderator and language partner were in an intimate relationship. increase. Mahmud (2018) also looked at how English students perceived respect. However, the focus wasn't on a particular courtesy strategy—the off-the-record strategy. All previous research has not further investigated off-the-record strategies in mixed classroom interactions.

Yanti (2017) researched the covert methods used on the renowned American talk show "Oprah Winfrey Show" to describe modesty in the discussion. The findings indicated that the context of the circumstance and violations of conversational rules had an impact on the choice of methods. The results also showed that there were several instances where characteristics involved in dialogue, like intonation, influenced the choice of tactic. Additionally, it was found that several statements used multiple strategies. The use of off-the-record politeness

was studied in this study, but for this discussion, we have focused on a specific tactic: rhetorical inquiries.

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the polite language teachers use when teaching English in online and offline classrooms (mixed classrooms) and to recognize and evaluate the formal language that English teachers employ with their students when doing so. was to discuss how language has an impact. It was based on pragmatic research. The scope of the study will be limited to the use of polite expressions used verbally by teachers in English classes in co-educational classrooms. In this part, the researchers focused not only on the English expressions but also on the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia).

Some researchers have discussed off-record strategies, namely: Hutahaeen, Herman, & Girsang (2021) which uncovered 37 politeness in the talk show *Pesbukers*. The politeness techniques used in *Pesbukers* variety shows were then compared to the four etiquette approaches described by Brown and Levinson (1987). On the record, They were off the record 1, bald 6, positive politeness 26 (70%), and negative politeness 4 (11%). (3 percent). In *Pesbukers'* variety program, positive politeness was the most prevalent type of politeness technique. The majority of *Pesbukers* used positive civility to foster a pleasant atmosphere, forge wonderful relationships, and maintain good touch between speaker and hearer. resulting in a well-run discourse.

In addition, Terada, Okazoe & Gratch (2021) revealed that agents who utilized an off-the-record tactic were able to obtain more concessions from their human partners, whereas positive politeness, which does not put the other's face in danger, resulted in more equitable negotiated deals. The human participants were unafraid to take advantage of bots who lacked courtesy in their speech. Politeness is one of the tools individuals employ to manage the social rewards and penalties that come with all encounters, and our research shows that agents can benefit from it.

Estaji & Nejad (2021) found that teachers' attitudes and use of politeness methods in oral classroom discourse among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. 29 EFL teachers were chosen, and their classroom talks with their pupils were audio-taped and observed as a result. In addition, ten teachers were interviewed to gain a better understanding of their attitudes toward civility. The findings demonstrated that in most of their contacts with their students, Iranian EFL teachers used positive politeness tactics to soften their tone and give more credit to their ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs. These

findings may have ramifications for instructors' classroom relationships and careers.

Those research findings discussed the same topic about off-record strategy but they did not focus on the EFL classroom context. Regarding those previous research findings, the researchers intended to conduct the study about off-record strategies used by the teacher in teaching English in the Blended Classroom

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The face-threatening behaviors of addressees constitute affronts to the face, which must be remedied according to the politeness principle. The politeness theory, which was first developed in 1978 by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, has since broadened academia's understanding of civility.

The aim of the speaker to lessen face threats carried by certain face-threatening acts toward another is expressed through politeness (Mills, 2003:6). Although the purpose of politeness is to make everyone feel at ease and ease with one another, these culturally determined norms occasionally may be used to humiliate a particular party. Therefore, being polite involves making an effort to maintain another's dignity. There are a few ways to act politely: 1. Using hedging and indirectness to convey uncertainty and ambiguity; 2. polite deceit; 3. using euphemisms, which exploit ambiguity and connotation to disguise meaning ( which make use of ambiguity as well connotation).

Conversely, if they find themselves in a group that is more focused on negative face wants, those who are used to attending to positive face wants and utilizing positive politeness methods may find that they come out as crude or vulgar.

The analysis in this study is only applicable to those techniques' off-the-record tactics. It serves as a good example of indirect word use. It's interesting to see what individuals indicate when they want to be polite to someone else. Four further ways do not go into detail on how they are structured. This study sought to better understand the teacher's off-the-record tactics in a hybrid classroom.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher used a qualitative descriptive design. This research aimed to find out the kinds of off-record polite expressions used by teachers in teaching English in the classroom and the effects on the students during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique in selecting the

participant in this study. The subject of this research was one English teacher at SMAN 1 Makassar (one of my favorite schools in Makassar, South Sulawesi). This study was conducted in January-May of 2022. The instrument which was used in this research, as follows;

### **Observation and recording.**

Researchers employed observation to gather reliable data by merely following participants' (educators) participation in educational activities. In this study, researchers recorded the teaching-learning process by observing activities outside the classroom and giving an audio recorder to the teacher to perform the teaching-learning process. Also, when conducting observations, researchers used an observation checklist as an observation device. In addition, researchers recorded activity with a video recorder to more accurately determine data collection. It was suggested that the researchers focused solely on verbal communication, as well as the lecturer's speech and expressions. Additionally, audio recordings were also obtained from Google Meet sessions (synchronous learning) to support data from observations.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

In person, the class was conducted at SMAN 1 Makassar, South Sulawesi. It is held on the 20th of April 2022. The researchers observed classroom interaction. Here is the extract;

Extract 1 (20th of April, 2022)

T: Finish?

T: Assalamualaikum Wr.Wb. and Good morning

S1: Waalaikumussalam Wr. Wb. Good morning mam

In the above extract, before starting the class, the teacher (T) asked the students "finish?" and then followed by the opening utterance "Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh". When the teacher asked the question, it can be seen that the teacher (T) implied indicated information for the students to get focused because the class would be starting soon, this expression by the teacher contained a question with no intention of obtaining an answer, furthermore, the teacher intention was to attract the students to stop their activities and pay attention to the class which was about to be started. The students didn't answer the question but quickly realized that they were required to leave all the activities due to the opening of the lesson. Therefore, depending on the Brown and Levinson-proposed politeness methods (1987), this question

is categorized as a Rhetorical Question as one strategy of Off-Record Politeness. These findings in line with other findings from Mubarak & Rhaif (2022), revealed that Although American commencement speakers use a variety of these techniques, they primarily focus on pleasant civility to inspire and forge a bond with the graduates. They addressed the question which is not theoretical or the certain answer needed but they used subjective questions.

Extract 2 (20th of April, 2022)

*T: Mail, Memed, Alling. Alling What happens to your book? It's broken.*

As we can see in the extract above, the teacher (T) uttered a question "What happened to your book?" subsequently followed by another sentence "It's like broken". The teacher (T) genuinely meant to imply that the book was no longer suitable for use as a note when she said, "It's like broken," in the second sentence. The teacher tried to show the student about the breakage and intended to inform the student that it was time to change the book with the new one. Based on the theory of Brow & Levinson, the utterance might imply criticism and it contains a presupposed expression. Isabella et al findings . are from 2022, which showed that indirect language helps speakers avoid sounding oppressive, confirming this conclusion. For instance, a speaker who employs the indirect approach can simply remark, "Wow, it's getting cold in here," without explicitly requesting that the audience get up and turn up the thermostat. Other instances of similar tactics include: Include hints "Oh no, I forgot to go to the bank today and now I'm short on cash".

*Extract 3 (22nd of April, 2022)*

*T: who wants to answer number two?*

*S3: The destination*

*T: I thought you need to answer*

From the conversation above we can see that the teacher uttered "Who wants to answer number two?" followed by the students' answer "The destination". After the students mentioned "the destination" subsequently followed by another utterance from the teacher (T) "I thought you need to answer". This sentence "I thought you need to answer" implies a warning to the students. The teacher intended to remind the students by using the utterance that it was an obligation for them to finish the homework and to do the exercises. Despite saying

"have you finished your task" the teacher prefers to use the expression as a clue to the students that they are being warned to complete the task. Based on the theory by Brown & Levinson, this utterance might imply an association clue.

*Extract 4 (22nd of April, 2022)*

*T: emmm, My mother?*

*S3: Is washing*

*T: My mother?*

*S3: is washing*

*Extract 5 (23rd of APRIL 2022)*

*So the answer from my mother is washing the dishes is?*

*T: The dishes are being?*

*S3: Washed*

From the data above we can see that the utterance from the teacher (T) "So the answer from my mother is washing the dishes is?" was subsequently followed by another utterance "The dishes are being?". After the teacher mentioned the sentence, the students gave their answer "washed". Practically, something more gets communicated than was said. According to the context, the utterance was intended to ask the students to give their correct answers. The students could get the points and finally respond to the teacher by giving the correct phrase "is washing". Moreover, based on the theory of Brown & Levinson, the teacher applied a hint strategy which is considered one of the strategies in off-record politeness.

From the extract above we can see that the teacher (T) said "emmmm, my mother?" with raising intonation and stressing the word "mother". It was followed by the student's "is washing". Furthermore, the teacher (T) repeatedly uttered "my mother?" subsequently followed again by the student's "is washing". The expression "My mother?" used by the teacher (T) indicated the desired action. The teacher produced the utterance with a raising intonation to show she expected the students to continue the word with true lexical and grammatical utterances. The students could get the points and finally respond to the teacher by giving the correct phrase "is washing". Moreover, based on the theory of Brown & Levinson, the teacher applied to give a hint strategy which is considered one of the strategies in off-record politeness. This result was in line with the findings of Salman & Beti (2020), in their study covered the students tend to respond to the teacher's statement spontaneously while in casual interactions, the



students are more polite, while in official interactions with their teacher and the department head, they are less polite and more threatening. In casual interactions, the students are more polite, while in official interactions with their teacher and the department head, they are less polite and more threatening.

*Extract 6 (23rd of April 2022)*

*T: The police officer*

*S4: Has*

*T: Has*

*S4: Caught*

*T: The?*

*S5: The Thief*

From the data above we can see that the utterance from the teacher (T) "The police officer" was subsequently followed by another utterance "has" from the students. Subsequently, the teacher continued with the utterance "Has?" which was pursued by the students' utterance "Caught". Soon afterward the teacher (T) uttered "The?" which was followed by the students' answer "the thief". Practically, the utterances "The police officer?", "Has?", and "The?" According to the context, these utterances were intended to ask the students to give their correct answers. The students could get the points and finally respond to the teacher by giving the correct phrases "Has", "Caught", and "The thief". Moreover, based on the theory of Brown & Levinson, the teacher applied a hint strategy which is considered one of the strategies in off-record politeness. Because the teacher was trying to raise the issue so that the students were trying to give appropriate responses.

There were two main findings in this session. Initially, it was the outcome of two sessions that included some excerpts from the teacher's usage of off-the-record courteous language when teaching English in the classroom. Additionally, the learning exercises were separated into three groups: opening, primary learning, and closing. There were various other off-the-record courteous remarks in this section, including giving hints, giving association clues, presupposing, and giving rhetorical metaphors, which were used by teachers in teaching English in the classroom.

In addition, Khasanah (2018), Salman & Beti (2020) indicated that The teacher uses the bald-on-record technique in the classroom to get an immediate response and grab the students' attention. Mostly, it is used to give the students orders. By saying exactly what she intends, the teacher will prevent misunderstandings as she uses the bald-on-record

technique. This tactic is typically used when a teacher offers instructions to students.

To get the data from the online session, the researcher joined as the observer and participant in the online class held by the teacher. The class was done via google meet and zoom cloud meeting.

*The utterances in an online class are as follows:*

*Extract 1: Greeting (17th of May, 2022)*

*(Opening the class)*

*T: Assalamu' Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatu (God's peace be with you)*

*S5: Waalaikumsalam Warahmatullahi Wabarakatu*

*T: Alhamdulillah, I hope you are always in good condition*

*S6: Aamiin*

In Part 1, the teacher begins the lesson by saying "Assalamu' Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah wabarakatu" (Peace be upon you) before explaining the subject, and the students say "Wa'alaikumsalam Warahmatullahi wabarakatu (Peace be upon you)". I answered with the words This type of greeting is an Islamic greeting that is always uttered in Muslim communities to share blessings with others. For example, While using Islamic pleasantries is preferred, other forms of pleasantries are also acceptable. Good morning and Selamat Pagi. The use of Islamic utterances is beneficial in addition to a good relationship with God. The use of Islamic greetings in this excerpt demonstrates the good behavior of the students and pupils, demonstrating politeness.

*Extract 2 (18th of May, 2022)*

*T: Okay, firstly I would like to tell you a little bit about your task. Now we come to the new discussion.*

In Extract 2, the teacher started to elicit the students' difficulties regarding the task or assignment. The teacher reviewed the previous lesson before she dealt with a new topic. This activity was conducted to grasp the students' attention and focus on the lesson that the teacher was about to discuss. This extract showed the reflection from the teacher is a crucial part of the teaching and learning process. It leads the students to explore their experience and the obstacles that they faced in the classroom

In the end, the teacher will be perceived as friendly and open to friendship as she practices positive politeness. She will also appear bright to students by giving praise, satisfy students' desire to participate actively in class activities by asking them questions, and emphasize that

she and the students are in the same situation by including both of them in the activity.

## **Discussion**

The researchers acknowledge the friendliness in the relationship with the listener or listeners and their wish to be respected, according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion. It might be stated that when a teacher speaks to students, the instructor should examine all facets of what he or she is about to say. As a result, the conversation's goal will be clear and understandable to the interlocutor, and it will not contain any force. One of the etiquette methods is to express gratitude to students and teachers. The instructor has the obligation of training the kids' character by utilizing polite terms in all classroom talks. As a result, the researchers, based the method on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, which can be alternate terms that the instructor can employ in everyday classroom dialogue. Yule (2002) argues that the teacher's expressions and the form of his or her face can represent the teacher's mood, actions, and feelings. Discussing how the teacher employed expressions in the classroom to teach English, which can be seen at every meeting. Based on the conditions, the teacher has utilized all of the terms. As the researcher, I observed the teacher's techniques in the first and second meetings, which differed significantly. It's the use of greetings, for example. Furthermore, it is considered that using simple polite statements regularly can improve daily interactions and make people feel respected and valued. Politeness is frequently implicitly taught to language learners as things they should and should not say and do when conversing in English.

The interactive language framework should be linked to greetings so that the instructor can introduce social context and have the pupils explore different types of welcomes in their own culture and environment. Aeni noted that the use of greetings in the opening session in the classroom at the start of the meeting must take into account the setting and the background of the students. As a Moslem, she used to greet people with "Assalamualaikum" (peace be upon you). The usage of greeting language such as "Assalamualaikum" is an excellent way to start a conversation. However, in other religious elements, it might be a source of imposition for pupils of different faiths. As a result, she feels that all teachers should be aware of when to utilize greeting expressions such as the Moslem greeting when they meet. As a result, students will appreciate the teaching-learning process if the teacher is aware of the classroom setting, such as nondiscrimination in each student.

Fortunately, it can assist teachers in creating a positive environment for each kid in this manner. As a result, students will pay greater attention and participate more actively in all class activities. Furthermore, it is a form of indirect advice to students on the subject.

There are numerous factors that an educator must consider before teaching a lesson in the classroom. An educator must be cautious when utilizing a variety of languages during the teaching-learning process. As a guide, the teacher's attitude and words will be followed by the students. As a result, the instructor must exhibit a good attitude in both his or her actions and words. The usage of polite language in the teaching-learning process requires the teacher's attention. It can also be seen in two meetings when the teacher employed a variety of language and tactics. The greeting that the teacher used has been examined.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, teachers have the privilege of making students aware of behaviors and speech practices that are disproportionate across cultures. Therefore, teachers should know when to use appropriate expressions to channel the personality of their students. This ensures a positive environment for the students. Second, the findings show that teachers' use of polite language when teaching in the classroom has several important effects. A good strategy of discreet politeness employed by teachers in this study is avoidance, sarcasm, or joking. The student was able to keep the conversation polite. Moreover, in this reality today, traditional (classical) methods of The way that students were treated during our earlier education as students cannot be extended to teaching and communication with students now. Therefore, we found some important information about the impact on students. Motivation to learn, student attitudes (emotional), respect for teachers, self-confidence, activity, participation in the teaching and learning process, and integrity.

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