POLITENESS OF NON-VERBAL INTERACTION IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal communication is not only expressed explicitly in verbal messages, but it also includes implicit messages, which are expressed through non-verbal behaviours, such as kinesics, paralinguistic, proxemics, and chronemics.Those give salient clues, additional information and meaning, and mark polite or impolite over and above verbal communication (Brown and Levinson, 1987, Farr, 1962 in Jasim, and Aziz, 2010, and Poyatos, 1981: 20). This present study is aimed at discussing politeness of non-verbal interaction between teacher and students in EFL classroom in 4 senior high schools in Semarang Municipality. The data were video-recorded spoken texts from fifteen different classroom settings. Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework of positive politeness and negative politeness is adopted to examine the data. An ethnography analysis reveals that non-verbal interactions between interlocutors emphasize their verbal expressions to convey both positive and negative politeness with various and different forms of non-verbal behaviours.

Keywords: non-verbal behaviours, positive politeness, and negative politeness

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Communication is an ongoing process of sending and receiving messages that enables interlocutors to convey their knowledge, ideas, thoughts, information, feelings, emotions, and attitudes. Communication in classroom interaction in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, the interlocutors (teacher and students) should have not only linguistic competence but also communicative competence (Celce-Murcia et al.: 1995). Among the elements of communicative competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence seem to be the important role to enhance the effectiveness of communication (Canale, 1983, p. 11). Sociocultural competence refers to the speaker's knowledge of how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication, in accordance with the pragmatic factors related to variation in language use. Strategic competence is the ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in order to overcome problems in the planning and execution stages of reaching a communicative goal, negotiate of meaning and repair mechanisms, and as means of keeping the communication channel open in the face of communication difficulties, and playing for time to think and to make (alternative) speech plans (Celce-Murcia et al.: 1995).

Interpersonal communication is to convey and receive information or messages in explicit meaning of words and in implicit messages, which are expressed through non-verbal behaviours. The interlocutors comprehend their meaning not just from their words, but also from their facial expressions, body language, or gestures. Nonverbal communication is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages (Farr (1962) in Jasim and Aziz: 2010) or word messages that may contain non-verbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, emotion and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress (Poyatos , 1981: 20).

In accordance with politeness, verbal and nonverbal expressions can signal polite or impolite behaviours. Both can maintain harmonious and smooth social interaction, and to avoid the use of potentially threatening, even damaging the face. In classroom interaction, maintaining eye contact while a teacher is giving explanation shows polite, meaning that students are giving

the teacher the consideration of full attention. Eye contact that is too focused and too prolonged is likely to be seen as impolite. Politeness is often presented to interlocutors explicitly and implicitly, basically as things they should or should not say and do when interacting. Appropriate polite interaction is obviously reflected in speech acts which can be realized in verbal and non-verbal expressions.

Non-verbal expressions give salient clues, additional information and meaning, and mark polite or impolite over and above verbal communication. This paper focused on the description of how politeness is realized on non-verbal interaction in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical framework of politeness adopted for the present study is mainly based on Brown and Levinson's theory (1987), Ide (1989), Gu (1990), Blum-Kulka (1992), and Watts (2003), in non-verbal interaction perspectives. Brown and Levinson's theory relies on two basic notions: negative face and positive face. Negative face refers to the freedom to act without being impeded by others and positive face refers to the desire that others approve of, or value one's wants (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The aim of politeness in social interactions is to maintain harmonious and smooth social interaction, and to avoid the use of potentially threatening, even damaging the face. Ide (1989) asserts that politeness is the basis for maintaining and improving communication, which is based on status and social level, power and structures of kinship, and situation (formal or informal). Furthermore, Lakoff (1990) explains that cultural differences will provide a different emphasis on each rule.

Relating to politeness concepts, politeness is the use of the right word or phrase in the proper context, which is determined by the rules that are prevalent in society (Arndt and Janney, 1985a). Speech acts can be categorized polite if the speech: (a) does not contain any speakers' coercion or vanity, (b) gives the option to the speaker to do something, (c) provides comfortable and friendly to the hearer (Lakoff, 1990 in Senowarsito, 2013). According to Gu (1990), the notion of face is not only considered as desire, but also as societal norms. Politeness principle is considered as a belief that individual behavior must be adapted to the expectations of society on respect, modesty, and warm and sincere attitude. Likewise, Blum-Kulka (1992) affirms that politeness is tied to a particular culture. Politeness is associated with the use of an appropriate word or phrase in the appropriate context, which is determined by the rules that are prevalent in society. In social interaction, to maintain politeness is to maintain harmonious and smooth social interaction, and avoid the use of potentially threatening or damaging the face. Politeness is influenced by intimacy, closeness, relationships, the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, and conditions of the existing situation in social interaction as well (Senowarsito, 2013, p.85).

Politeness in non-verbal interaction

One thing that is important in giving the value of politeness in verbal communication is nonverbal language. The role of non-verbal expressions seems to be essential in determining the politeness. Research conducted by Mehrabian (in Goman, 2008: 26, Bowden, 2010: 6-7), reveals that only 7 percent of communication is determined by the use of words, 38 percent is based on the tone of voice, and 55 percent based on facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other forms of nonverbal communication. In the context of face to face communication, nonverbal expressions usually go along with verbal language. It can be interpreted to mean that the effect on the nonverbal aspects of politeness is very large. The criteria of politeness can not only be measured by verbal aspects, but also nonverbal aspects. In communication, that verbal and nonverbal behaviors effect politeness norms. Verbal behavior of a student to a teacher, for example, 'I'm sorry sir, I forgot to bring my book' is considered in polite manner if supported by nonverbal behaviors such as head bowed and facial expressions that show regret. When talking to another person, our body is equipped with dozens of gestures, eye movements, and facial expressions. In fact, sometimes we are not aware of these movements, especially if it is a

habit we usually do in certain situations. Wardaugh (1985) argued that much of non-verbal behavior is unconscious.

Establishing a good communication between teacher and students introduces successful classroom interaction in conducting learning and teaching process. Classroom interaction involves two forms of communication, verbal and nonverbal. Speech interaction is more than words. It also involves gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and symbols to communicate which always accompany verbal discourse. Nonverbal communication is particularly important with respect to teaching. 75% of a teacher's classroom management direction is nonverbal (Balzer, 1969). McNeill (1992) estimated that up to 82% of the communication techniques employed by teachers in the classroom are nonverbal. Using nonverbal communication due to words has limitations. In some areas, nonverbal communication is more effective than verbal. Nonverbal messages are likely to be more genuine, because nonverbal behaviors cannot be controlled as easily as spoken words. In the same way as verbal signals, some paralinguistic expressions have several functions, such as managing identity, defining relationships, and conveying attitudes.

Nonverbal communication comes in many forms. The four kinds of nonverbal communication are kinesics, proxemics, paralanguage, and chronemics (Hickson, 2010). Lunenburg, Fred C. (2010) elaborates that **kinesics** is body movements include gestures, facial expressions, eye behavior, touching, and any other movement of the limbs and body. People tend to gesture more when they are enthusiastic, excited, and energized. Facial expressions convey a wealth of information. The particular look on a person's face and movements of the person's head provide reliable cues as to approval, disapproval, or disbelief. Eye contact is a strong nonverbal cue that serves some functions in communication (Hickson, 2010). Touching is a powerful vehicle for conveying such emotions as warmth, comfort, agreement, approval, reassurance, and physical attraction. Generally, the amount and frequency of touching demonstrate closeness, familiarity, and degree of liking. **Proxemics** is the way people perceive and use space, including seating arrangements, physical space, and conversational distance (personal space). **Paralanguage** consists of variations in speech, such as voice quality, volume, tempo, pitch, non-fluencies (for example, uh, um, ah), laughing, yawning, and the like. **Chronemics** is concerned with the use of time, such as being late or early, keeping others waiting, and other relationships between time and status (Hickson, 2010).

Nonverbal behaviours can serve to support, complement, regulate, modify and/or replace verbal messages. The use of verbal messages should be congruent with non-verbal expressions. The way to express a verbal message can be considered polite or impolite depends on gestures, facial expressions, or voice quality and volume accompanying the verbal expressions.

There are, however, cultural norms and values in different contexts that may be a source of politeness. In teaching learning process in Javanese contexts, while a teacher is giving explanation to students in front of the class and the students are keep silent listening to the teacher's speech without any interruption can be considered as polite interaction. In some cultures, interrupting in conversation is common, but not in other cultures. As with nonverbal communication, what is considered usual or polite behavior in one culture may be seen as unusual or impolite in another. Gestures and facial expressions carry meaning that is determined by situations, relationships and cultures. Eye contacts have various meaning. Insufficient or excessive eye contact can create communication barriers. In relationships, gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts, and other nonverbal signals can serve to show intimacy, attention, and influence.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This present study aimed to discuss politeness of nonverbal interaction of teacher and students in EFL classroom interaction in senior high school. The data were video-recorded spoken texts from eight different classroom settings where English was as the object and the

medium of teaching learning process. The subjects were eight non-native English teachers in eight different classes.

The analysis was based on politeness concepts proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). To support the analysis, it is also employed some politeness concepts introduced by Leech (1983), Ide (1989), Gu (1990), Blum-Kulka (1992), and Watts (2003). As politeness used by Javanese is really bound by the Javanese concepts, thus it is also seen from the politeness in nonverbal Javanese perspectives. The data were analyzed based on the model analysis introduced by Spradley (1980). This analysis focused on the teacher's and student's use of the politeness in nonverbal classroom interaction. Nonverbal expressions were recorded in an audiovisual recording set. At the same time of the recordings process, field notes were taken to help the researcher better identify the existence of non-verbal signals. Other steps were to conduct a peer discussion and verification in order to have deeper insights into this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the classroom, students and teachers sent and received both consciously and unconsciously, a lot of nonverbal message cues. Teachers expressed many messages through facial expression, vocal intonation, gestures and use of space. The realization of non-verbal politeness in EFL classroom interaction in teacher and students perspectives was in the forms of nonverbal immediacy behaviours and nonverbal behaviours accompanying verbal messages.

Nonverbal immediacy behaviours include kinesics, proxemics, paralanguage, and chronemics in the non-verbal communication of interpersonal attitudes. Relating to the politeness concepts, teachers mostly employed positive politeness by expressing some gestures which are associated with assisting or giving cueing for students to comprehend or catch out the messages, explanation, or information given by the teachers. Those were expressed in some gestures while talking to the class. It is common that students in an EFL classroom may not always understand what their teachers want them to do when given directions in English. Apparently, gestures and cueing are important. The teachers used their body language to help students understand the information or messages, or instruction given. Teachers used appropriate gestures to transmit their minds. For instance, when a teacher wanted to show one is group A and another is group B, he was moving to each group and pointing the one group as group A and the other as group B. On the other hand, it was considered as negative politeness when a teacher gave instruction, such as *'Just move it back you chair'*; he moved his hands around showing how to move the chair around. It shows that the teacher wanted to lessen impede and imposition to the students by providing comfortable and friendly instruction.

The other nonverbal behaviours that show positive politeness were standing and walking around the class, looking at the class, and smiling while talking. Mostly the teachers were standing in front of the class and sometimes looking around the whole class, when talking to the students, which let students feel comfortable. Therefore, teachers knew how to utilize different facial expressions to deal with different situations that appear in the classroom in order to create good studying atmosphere and enhance their teaching effect. For instance, when a student gave a wrong answer, the teachers encouraged him with a smile. The teachers need to keep students enthusiastic and joyful in English learning. A warm smile could give students feel comfortable in studying. To do this, some teachers made some jokes. Hence, teachers and students kept their relationships under a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere.

The appropriate distance between interlocutors was considered as positive politeness. In their classroom interaction, the teachers were standing in different positions in appropriate distance that could make students feel attentiveness and thoughtfulness. Such distance could be comprised as positive politeness. But it was considered as negative politeness when the distance made by the teacher was to avoid the imposition of student's privacy. Negative politeness were employed by the teacher to avoid giving offense by showing deference or to avoid imposition on the students and involving personally the students to lessen power and distance by creating nonverbal expressions.

All the teachers observed used vocal varieties when talking to the class. They realized that the role of paralinguistic features in learning English as second language was important. The paralinguistic component refers to how to say the words, the tone, pacing and volume of voices, and sentence stress. Some teachers employed negative politeness by using law tone and volume, for instance when let a late student join to the class.

Generally, students employed positive politeness on their nonverbal behaviours. The students sit upright in their chairs. They maintained eye contact with their teachers, when the teachers were talking. These nonverbal messages had been shown to stimulate meanings of attentiveness and responsiveness. Positive politeness was showed by the students when they directly gave response of what the teacher's instruction without any objections. The students tended to employ positive politeness as well to give respect and feel close to their teachers. Moreover, the limitation of the linguistic ability of students had contributed to produce nonverbal expression. Sometimes, the students used silent expression in their response(s) to the teacher's question(s), because of inadequate knowledge or skills in English. There were some utterances violating the politeness principle, quality maxim, yet they are acceptable in EFL classroom and cannot be considered impolite.

Nonverbal behaviours accompanying verbal messages were other important consideration in this study. In fact, there is a tendency to be more communicative if a verbal message is accompanied by nonverbal messages, and both should be congruent. For example, when a teacher asked a student to open a slide screen at the same time the teacher was moving her hand up-down showing holding something down and her hand was directing to the slide screen. Although she didn't express it incomplete verbal, such as 'please someone ….., her request was understandable. It means that nonverbal messages accompanying verbal message could emphasize, support, substitute, add, and complement the intended message. Politeness of verbal expression can be measured from the appropriateness of nonverbal behavior going along with it.

The positive and negative politeness found in verbal expressions in different speech acts employed by the teachers and students in classroom interaction were mostly emphasized and supported with appropriate non-verbal expressions in various behaviours. The following is an example of a positive politeness employed by both a teacher and her students in their classroom interaction.

Code		Speech Act (Linguistic markers)	Contexts of situation	Nonverbal
G	6	*Good morning everybody!*	The teacher is opening the class by greeting the students. Seeing the joy students in the classroom, a teacher deliver what some perceived by students.	The teacher is standing in front of the class with the medium-high pitch voice and her eyes turning to all students with smiling and enthusiastic facial expressions. Students are sitting in their own seats to respond cooperatively greeting from the teacher.
S	7	*Good morning, ma'am!*		
G	8	*You look very happy today!*		
S	9	*Yes, every day I am always happy, ma'am.*		

SMA2_GA_K3

Positive politeness on expressive speech acts demonstrated by the teacher on G6 <*Good morning, everybody!*> indicated that the teacher satisfied the student's positive-face want by addressing to the students to show the teacher's attention. It also confirms that the relationship was friendly and expresses group reciprocity. This verbal expression was supported and emphasized by nonverbal behaviours such as the teacher is standing in front of the class with the

medium-high pitch voice and her eyes turning to all students with smiling and enthusiastic facial expressions. Similar to the teacher, students responded the teacher greeting in positive politeness by showing respect to the teacher using honorific address '*ma'am*' expressed with enthusiastic and warm gestures. It also happen to the representative speech acts in G8 < *You look very happy today* > a compliment and sympathy addressed to students to show the teacher's attention to what was perceived by students accompanied by her eyes turning to all students with smiling and friendly-facial expressions. The teachers employed positive politeness for developing cooperative atmosphere of learning by positioning him/herself less powerful or keeping close to students, and reducing the threat of face (of dignity) of students. The students employed positive politeness that indicating to lessen the social distance and the power inequality, to place teachers as respected elder person and the single authority in teaching learning process in the class

CONCLUSION

The realization of non-verbal politeness in EFL classroom interaction of teacher and students were in the forms of nonverbal immediacy behaviours and nonverbal behaviours accompanying verbal messages. Nonverbal immediacy behaviours include kinesics, proxemics, paralanguage, and chronemics that do not always go along directly with verbal expression. Nonverbal behaviours accompanying verbal messages include gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage that directly blend to the verbal messages.

Both the teacher and student(s) employed positive and negative politeness that indicating to lessen the social distance and the power inequality of the students and the teachers, to place teachers as respected elder person and the single authority in teaching learning process in the class, to give weight to the students' participation on giving opinions, feelings and ideas by reducing the power of the teacher on her/his better knowledge and experiences, and to make a joke. Negative politeness were employed by the teacher and students to avoid giving offense by showing deference or to avoid imposition on the counterpart and involving personally the students to lessen power and distance by creating nonverbal expressions.

The positive and negative politeness found in verbal expressions in different speech acts employed by the teachers and students in classroom interaction were mostly emphasized and supported with appropriate non-verbal expressions in various behaviours.

It was also found that the same nonverbal behavior could show two different kinds of politeness, positive and negative. It was determined by the purpose of the nonverbal addressing to. The teachers' standing position in the class in appropriate distance that could make students feel attentiveness and thoughtfulness was considered as positive politeness. Reversely it was considered as negative politeness when the distance made by the teacher was to avoid the imposition of student's privacy.

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