The Importences Politeness Values in English Classroom

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Abstract

Its norms and politeness values. Some things that are considered polite in one culture could be considered impolite in another. This greatly affects the utilization of politeness value that is used by students in English textbooks that they use compared to their own culture that would creates some questions about politeness like which politeness value that they are supposed to use. Besides, politeness values in Eastern country like Indonesia are very prominent. The culture in Indonesia usually uses negative politeness values in conversations. This paper explains about the importance of norms and politeness values in interaction within English class. The purpose of this paper is to describe the English learning that is not only taken from textbooks but also inserts the politeness values of that very culture in order to enable the students in comparing and determining the forms and differences between those two politeness values. This paper is expected to give valuable contribution to English teachers and English class students in UMTS Tapanuli Selatan about how to see the difference between politeness values of textbooks and their own culture and how to apply the politeness values shown on the English textbooks.

Keywords: politeness values, English classroom

1.Introduction

Politeness is a part of pragmatics that is interesting subject to study. Politeness is studying about the way how we express what in our feeling or thought about something. As a human, we should know the way of our speaking and how we choose a word in order to get a good communication with others. Logically, we will get nice thing if we do something or say it with polite, it means that we respect and interest to other speaker. Politeness phenomenon is a basic foundation in social order of human social life that also reflected in language use. The study of politeness phenomena has traditionally been primarily concerned with individual choices in spoken face to face. Politeness will influence how one person interact out of their society even in their society itself. Someone can directly say, "Hey, what's up, friend?" to a friend, but he or she cannot say the same thing to a stranger because he or she can be considered as being polite or rude. This is happen because there are so many cultures in this world. And every culture has a different custom.

Politeness is related with feeling of someone, Holmes [1992:297] states that 'a polite person makes others feel comfortable' In this case, the speaker has to consider whether the situation is formal or informal. In formal situation, the appropriate way of talking to one who is known well, such as brother, it is depends to the context. Politeness and the way of speaking are influenced by the cultural background. In this paper, politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1987) is used in identifying kinds of politeness values that appear in students English textbooks. They devide politeness into five types, they are; bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and offrecord. Bald on-record strategies usually do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face, although there are ways that bald on-record politeness can be used in trying to minimize FTAs implicitly, for example: Pass me the water. Positive Politeness addresses the recipient's positive face,

his/ her wants and need. It acknowledges common ground between the interlocutors, for example: Hey, dude, can you lend me money? Or Let's get an ice cream (Brown & Levinson, 1987:102). Negative politeness addresses the recipient's need for self determination, to have her/his actions unimpeded, for example: Would you close the window? (Brown & Levinson 1987:129). Off-record attempts to minimize the imposition of the listener, for example: It's getting cold in here. Speaker has the opportunity to evade responsibility by claiming that H's interpretation of the utterance as a FTA is wrong .This type of politeness strategy is indirect strategy.

Furthermore, certain aspect are also influenced the degree of politeness, such us power, distance, and impositions (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 74). Power is crucial in politeness matter. Holmes (1995: 17) states that the power dimension refers to the ability of the participants to influence one another's circumstances. So, when one speaker has power over another means that he/she is able to lead the conversation. Power is also influenced by age differences. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987: 4) state that age differences will affect the formality of the speaker and hence the degree of politeness.

In this paper, some examples of utterance or sentence are taken from the English textbooks in order to determine and to apply the politeness values in English and Indonesian culture.

2.Methodology

This research is in the qualitative form. Sherman & Webb (2005:5) stated that qualitative research is a discovery into a new concept, not only verification of ideas. Ary, et all. (2010:22) stated that the focus of qualitative research is interpreting the experience of people. This paper is expected to give valuable contribution to English teachers and English class students in UMTS Tapanuli Selatan about how to see the difference between politeness values of textbooks and their own culture and how to apply the politeness values shown on the English textbooks. The data are collected, then make a description of it, and conclude.

In this part, the examples politeness values that appear in English textbook are analyzed whether it is influenced by English culture or mix of both cultures.

Dialog 1 (English textbook of Class)

The first dialog is between two friends. It is appeared in English textbook for students class.

Tony : You look so pale. I bring you some soup, fix you some tea and bake you some treats. Hope you recover soon.

Jhonson : Thanks a lot. What a lovely friend you are! I really appreciate that.

Tony : I'd also water your plants and tidy your room.

Jhonson : Thank you very much. I'm glad you do it for me.

Tony : to help you feel better, I'd fluff up your pillow and straighten your sheets.

Jhonson : I am so grateful to you. You're the best friends I have ever had.

In the conversation above, it can be seen that the second speaker uses positive politeness which can be seen from the utterance "Thanks a lot" which suggests that they are close friends and he tries to minimize the distance between them. In the English classroom, teacher needs to tell his/her students that it is okay to say "thanks or thanks a lot" if the conversation happens between two or more friends. Moreover, it is not appropriate to say

to someone older than those students, for example: teacher, parents, elder, etc. The appropriate one is "Thank you or thank you very much".

Dialog 2 (English textbook of Class)

Mr. Tommy	: Hi, how are you?
Bill	: We're good. Thanks. Ann: Excellent.
Bill	: You have a nice hair cut, Mr.
Ann	: Yes, you're looking good with your hair style.
Mr. Tommy	: Thanks a lot. Bill, I heard you won the Math Olympiad. Is it true?
Bill	: Yes, I won the second prize lastweek.
Mr. Tommy	: I'm glad to hear that.
Bill	: Thank you very much for saying so.

The case of politeness is also appeared in the dialog above. Bill's utterance "We're good. Thanks" indicates that she uses positive politeness strategy which is a part of English culture. It is also the same with the previous dialog, that it is not appropriate to use the short term "thanks" in answering older speaker utterance. It is considered okay if the dialog happens between friends but not with the teacher. The best response which aligns with Indonesian culture is "Thank you or thank you for asking, Sir".

The next dialog is between a teacher and her students in the classroom.

Teacher: Attention, please! Attention, please!

Students : Yes, Ma'am.

Teacher : Ann, please look at me! Would you stop doing that please? Are you ready to learn? Ann : I'm so sorry, Ma'am. Yes, I am.

Teacher : Attention, please. Are we all ready to learn English?

Students : Yes, Ma'am.

The dialog above suggests that the teacher uses negative politeness in her utterance which can be seen from the word "please". It is suggested that teacher does not need to use "please" in conversing with their students because teacher has a power over his or her students. Teacher, in the classroom, need to realize that they do not need to use this word to show the students that he/she is needed to be heard. By saying please, teacher makes it sound like he/she begs for the students to stop talking or being annoying in the class while she/he should just say "Attention, students!" or "Ann, look at me" without the word "please" in it.

4.Conclusion

The culture in Indonesia usually uses negative politeness values in conversations. This paper explains about the importance of norms and politeness values in interaction within English class. The purpose of this paper is to describe the English learning that is not only taken from textbooks but also inserts the politeness values of that very culture in order to enable the students in comparing and determining the forms and differences between those two politeness values.

It is found that there are some aspects of politeness values of English cultures and Indonesian culture in students' English textbooks. It appears that mostly English textbook

contain of English culture which should be understood deeper by the students in order to avoid misunderstanding in their conversations. Moreover, students will face difficulty in understanding those kinds of politeness in English textbooks without any guidance from their teachers. Teachers are expected to fully aware of this matter because it is somehow will affect their ways in being polite in the future. Based on the investigation, it is found that there are lack of conversations between students and teacher which should be added more in English textbooks. So that students can differentiate how to act polite to the teachers or other students based on the degree of politeness.

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