Politeness Strategies in Text Messaging (A Case Study of Students’ Text Messages to the Lecturers in English Study Program Universitas Brawijaya)

Yana Shanti Manipuspika\textsuperscript{a)} and Emy Sudarwati\textsuperscript{b)}

Universitas Brawijaya, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Malang, East Java, Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{a)}Corresponding author: yana.manipuspika@gmail.com
\textsuperscript{b)}emoy_sanyoto@ub.ac.id

Abstract. Nowadays, text messaging between student and lecturer in academic environment is getting more and more common. This study analyzes the politeness strategies found in students’ text messages to their lecturers at English Study Program Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya Malang, Indonesia. This research used qualitative approach to analyze students’ text messages. The politeness strategies were analyzed according to Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory \cite{1}. The findings show that students used a variety of politeness strategies, including positive and negative politeness strategies. No students used the off-record strategy. The strategies used in texting junior or senior lecturers are not very much different. In terms of positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald on record strategy, the strategies applied to senior and junior lecturers are similar, indicating that seniority does not give any significance regarding students’ text messages. From the results of interview, it can be concluded that students’ writing and the choice of words should be taken into account as it may affect the lecturers’ feeling in an unfavourable way.

Keywords—politeness strategies; face-threatening acts; senior and junior lecturers; text messaging.

INTRODUCTION

Technologies have now brought us into a more convenient and easy way of communication, including mobile phones. Through its facilities, mobile phone offers us many facilities, one of which is sending text messages. Today, text messages sent via mobile phone are also used for communication in academic setting. Text messages have brought lecturers and students to a closer contact, removing some of the traditional boundaries between them. In academic life, especially in a university, there is an interaction between students and lecturers. For some reasons, this interaction can be done via text message service. In doing so, both the lecturers and the students should be aware of ‘rules’ when sending text messages to each other. These, among others, are the consideration of role relationship, power, and distance referring to the existence of a gap in status and the nature of the relationship between students and lecturers.

The ease that the text messages (SMS) brought, however, creates a dilemma. On the one hand, it is very useful for communication, but on the other hand, it has caused students writing to their lecturers using the language and style meant for their friends. Students feel free to construct sentences in text messages that they will not normally use inside the classroom. Lecturers, who welcome students’ academic requests via SMS found that some students do
Based on a preliminary study that had been conducted on identifying the above case, it was found out that the phenomenon happens in the English Study Program Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya (FIB-UB). Based on the preliminary interview, the lecturers said that they had various experiences in dealing with this. They said that they frequently got text messages in language which is felt to be inappropriate in context. Furthermore, they said that students seem to be unaware of politeness strategies they have to apply in text messaging their lecturers. This, accordingly, could cause communication breakdown.

Similar phenomenon has been expressed by [2] who conducted a study on politeness in emails of Arab students in Malaysia. This study analyzes the politeness strategies found in Arab postgraduate students’ emails to their supervisors during their period of study at Malaysian universities. The findings show that Arab students use various politeness strategies, including the use of positive and negative politeness. They tend to be more direct in their requests via email when communicating in English. No students use indirect strategies. This study provides an insight into the Arab students’ politeness strategies that would help to avoid misunderstanding, and misinterpretation of their emails, as well as to improve student’s pragmatic awareness in writing emails in English.

The previous description provides background for the proposed study on politeness strategies used by students in English Study Program FIB-UB in sending text messages to their lecturers. It is intended to investigate the politeness strategies used by the students when requesting for information and giving information to their lecturers in relation with academic matter. The participants are the students who send messages to the lecturers during the period of data collection of the study, and the lecturers who receive text messages from the students. As the primary data in the intended research are the students’ text messages, the study falls under the category of qualitative study design with content analysis. Following Miles and Huberman’s [3] description on theoretical sampling, the lecturer participants will be under the category of seniors, those who have more teaching experiences (more than 20 years), and juniors that refer to those who have less than 20 years teaching experience.

To fulfil the needs of this research, the following research problems are formulated: (1) What are the politeness strategies in requesting and giving information used by English Study Program students when sending in their messages to the lecturers in Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya? (2) How would the strategies differ when the students make request and give information to senior and junior lecturers? (3) How do the lecturers respond to the politeness strategies used by students? (4) How do the students think of their strategies?

From this study, readers will have better understanding about politeness phenomena, not only from theory but also from its application in everyday life, especially in the communication between students and lecturers. In addition, it is expected that students’ academic understanding of the method of writing and the request strategies and the way of giving information via text messages to their lecturers will be improved.

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Politeness**

Politeness is defined as the relationship between how something is said and the addressee’s judgment as to how it should be said. As stated in [1] model, politeness phenomena are seen as redressed and computed as a function of speaker-hearer power-distance differential and degree of imposition [4]. Related to the statement, politeness’ principles have been considered to have wide descriptive power in respect of language use, to be major determinants of linguistic behavior and to have universal status. In line with [4], [5] states that politeness is not something we are born with, but something we have to learn and be socialized into, and ‘correct behavior’ to help us acquire polite skills.

Talking about politeness, there are some theories of politeness introduced by some experts. Lakoff, for example, introduces three maxim of politeness: do not impose/force; give choice; and make you addressee happy. [6] also introduces the theory of politeness, which is related to the concept of “Face.” He says that every participant in the social process has the need to be appreciated by others and the need to be free and not interfered with. In this sense, he calls the need to be appreciated “Positive Face” and the need to not be disturbed “Negative Face.”
Consequently, participants in conversations should, therefore, not violate one another’s “Face.” Refusing a request or reproaching someone is actions, which can form a threat to the other’s positive or negative face.

Related to the concept of face, “Face Threatening Acts” (FTAs), is needed to reduce the violation of face to a minimum and therefore preserve stability as much as possible. This can be achieved by using “Face Work Techniques.”

In this sense, politeness prevents or repairs the damage caused by FTAs. The greater the threat to stability, the more politeness, face work technique, is necessary. Just as there are two types of face, there are two types of politeness. Face work that is aimed at positive face is called “Solidarity Politeness,” while face work that deals with negative face is known as “Respect Politeness.”

Another theory of politeness was developed by Brown and Levinson [1]. They developed a theory on the relationship between the intensity of the threat to face and linguistically realized politeness. The intensity of the threat to face is expressed by a weight (W) that is linked to an FTA. This weight is the sum of three social parameters, which include the following:

1. The rate of imposition (burden), which is the “Absolute weight” of a particular act in a specific culture.
2. The social distance between the speaker and the person addressed.
3. The power that the person being spoken to has over the speaker.

The term ”Absolute weight” refers to the fact that, for example, the request “May I borrow your car?” is in a category other than “May I borrow your pen?” The request to borrow a car is of course not quite such a heavy demand if the person requesting the car is the car owner’s brother.

This illustrates that the factors “distance” and “power” influence the ultimate weight. Here, the ultimate weight of a FTA is defined as \( W(FTA) = R + D + P \), where: \( R \) = rate of imposition, \( D \) = distance, \( P \) = power.

In this context, politeness connects with someone’s face that the speaker delivers an act to hearer, especially in verbal act. Face is the public self-image that every adult tries to project. In [1], Brown and Levinson define positive face in two ways: as “the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others executors”, or alternately, “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants”. Negative face is defined as “the want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his actions be unimpeded by others”, or “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction like the freedom of action and freedom from imposition”. Brown characterizes positive face by desires to be liked, admired, ratified, and related to positively, noting that one would threaten positive face by ignoring someone. At the same time, negative face is characterized by the desire not to be imposed upon, noting that negative face could be impinged upon by constraining on someone. Positive face refers to one’s self-esteem, while negative face refers to one’s freedom to act. The two aspects of face should being intention in social interaction amongst the members in order to make interaction goes well so that the social relationship will be properly maintained.

Face-Threatening Acts (FTA)

According to [1], positive and negative faces exist universally in human culture. In social interactions, face-threatening acts (FTAs) are not to be ignored based on the terms of the conversation. A face-threatening act is a verbal act that could cause damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other. However, they can also be conveyed in the characteristics of speech such as tone, inflection, etc. or in non-verbal forms of communication. An utterance can be damaging individual’s desire or face when produced by a speaker. There will be at least one face damaged while an utterance is uttered in communication. Yet, it is a possibility that one utterance will damage more faces in its conveyance. In addition, FTA is classified into negative face-threatening acts and positive face-threatening acts.

A. Negative Face-Threatening Acts

Negative face is threatened when someone does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their addressee’s freedom of action. It can cause damage to either the speaker or the hearer, and makes one of them submit their will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are limited or even impeded when negative face is threatened.
Damage to the hearer

1. An act that affirms or denies a future act of the hearer and creates pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform the act.
   For example: orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, or warnings.
2. An act that expresses the speaker’s sentiments of the hearer or the hearer’s belongings.
   For example: compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, or expressions of strong negative emotion toward the hearer (e.g. hatred, anger).
3. An act that expresses some positive future act of the speaker toward the hearer. In doing so, pressure has been put on the hearer to accept or reject the act and possibly incur a debt.
   For examples: offers, and promises.

Damage to the speaker

1. An act that shows that the speaker is succumbing to the power of the hearer:
   For example: expressing thanks, accepting a thank or apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, a response to the hearer’s violation of social etiquette, and the speaker commits himself to something he or she does not want to do.

B. Positive Face-Threatening Acts

Positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not care about their addressee’s feelings, wants, or does not want what the other wants. Positive face threatening acts can also cause damage to the speaker or the hearer. When an individual is snapping other so that the addressee fears of him, it is implied that the positive face is threatened.

Damage to the hearer

1. An act that expresses the speaker’s negative assessment of the hearer’s positive face.
   For example: expressions of disapproval (e.g. insults, accusations, complaints).
2. An act that expresses the speaker’s indifference toward the addressee’s positive face.
   For example: contradictions, disagreements, or challenges.
3. The addressee might be embarrassed or fear the speaker.
   For example: excessively emotional expressions.
4. The speaker indicates that he doesn’t have the same values or fears as the hearer
   For example: disrespect, underestimate, bullying.
5. The speaker indicates that he is willing to disregard the emotional aspect of the hearer.
   For example: talking untruth or boasting.
6. The speaker indicates that he is talking about a topic that is a sensitive societal subject.
   For example: topics that relate to politics, race, and religion.
7. The speaker indicates that he is indifferent to the positive face wants of the hearer. This is most often expressed in obvious non-cooperative behavior.
   For example: interrupting, non-sequiturs.
8. The speaker misidentifies the hearer in an offensive or embarrassing way. This may occur either accidentally or intentionally. Generally, this refers to the misuse of address terms in relation to status, gender, or age.
   For example: Addressing a young woman as "ma’am" instead of "miss."

Damage to the speaker

1. An act that shows that the speaker is in some sense wrong, and unable to control himself.
   For example: apologies, acceptance of a compliment, inability to control one’s physical self, inability to control one’s emotional self, self-humiliation, confession

C. Strategies in Performing FTAs

Strategies in performing FTAs are used to minimize the risk of damaging speaker or hearer’s face and to formulate messages in order to save the hearer’s face when face-threatening acts are inevitable or desired. [1] outline four main politeness strategies to minimize FTAs: bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record (indirect).
1. **Bald on-record**

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 face-threatening acts implicitly. Often using such a strategy will shock or embarrass the addressee, so this strategy is most often used in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the audience, such as family or close friends. The following table displays Brown and Levinson’s various cases, in which someone might use the bald on-record strategy [1].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Instances in which threat minimizing does not occur</td>
<td>1. –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Great urgency or desperation</td>
<td>2. Watch out!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Speaking as if great efficiency is necessary</td>
<td>3. Hear me out...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Little or no desire to maintain someone’s face</td>
<td>5. Don’t forget to clean the blinds!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Doing the face-threatening act is in the interest of the hearer</td>
<td>6. Your headlights are on!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Instances in which the threat is minimized implicitly</td>
<td>7. –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Welcomes</td>
<td>8. Come in!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Positive Politeness**

Positive politeness strategies seek to minimize the threat to the hearer’s positive face. They are used to make the hearer feel good about him, his interests or possessions, and are most usually used in situations where the audience knows each other fairly well. In addition to hedge and attempts to avoid conflict, some strategies of positive politeness include statements of friendship, solidarity, compliments. The following is the categorization and examples from Brown and Levinson [1].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attend to H’s interests, needs, wants</td>
<td>1. You look sad. Can I do anything?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use solidarity in-group identity markers</td>
<td>2. Hey pal, can you lend me a dollar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be optimistic</td>
<td>3. I believe you will give me your favourite stuff on my birthday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Include both speaker (S) and hearer (H) in activity</td>
<td>4. If we help each other, I guess, we’ll both sink or swim in this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Offer or promise</td>
<td>5. If you wash the dishes, I’ll give you 3 bucks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exaggerate interest in H and his interests</td>
<td>6. What a beautiful diamond it is. Where did you get it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Avoid disagreement</td>
<td>7. X: That football team is so powerful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y: Yeah you’re right, but I think that team is underachieving right now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Joke</td>
<td>8. Wow, you look so thin in your picture!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Asserting S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants</td>
<td>9. I know you love roses, but the florists didn’t have any more, so I brought you geranium instead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness strategies are oriented towards the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. These strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there is a higher potential for awkwardness or embarrassment than in bald on record strategies and positive politeness strategies. Negative face is the desire to remain autonomous so the speaker is more apt to include an out for the listener, through distancing styles like apologies [1]. Some examples of negative politeness are in the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Be indirect</td>
<td>(1) Would you know where Oxford Street is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use hedges or questions</td>
<td>(2) Perhaps, he might have taken it, maybe. Could you please pass the rice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be pessimistic</td>
<td>(3) You couldn’t find your way to lending me a thousand dollars, could you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minimize the imposition</td>
<td>(4) It’s not too much out of your way, just a couple of blocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use obviating structures, like nominalizations, passives, or statements of general rules</td>
<td>(5) Spitting will not be tolerated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Apologize</td>
<td>(6) I’m sorry; it’s a lot to ask, but can you lend me a thousand dollars?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use plural pronouns</td>
<td>(7) I regret to inform you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Off-record (Indirect)

The final strategy outlined by [1] is the indirect strategy. This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing. For example, a speaker uses the indirect strategy might merely say “wow, it’s getting cold in here” is satirizing that it would be nice if the listener would get up and turn up the thermostat without directly asking the listener to do so.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research used qualitative method, specifically case study, aiming at describing the politeness strategies of the English Study Program students, FIB-UB. It focuses on the language of the students’ text messages sent to their lecturers in English Study Program, in the academic year of 2012-2013.

Data Source

The data of this research were students’ text messages sent to the lecturers when requesting for information; the transcription of interviews concerning the lecturers’ response to the students’ messages and the transcript of interview concerning the students’ opinion on their consideration in using specific strategies in sending messages to their lecturers.
In collecting the data, the following steps were taken:

1. Conducting document collecting by taking notes on all text messages sent by students to the lecturers. The participants were asked to forward all the students’ and the lecturers’ messages concerning request of information from the students.

2. Interviewing the lecturers concerning their opinions on the students’ text messages. The decision on the lecturer participant is based on theoretical sampling [3].

3. Interviewing the students concerning their opinion on the politeness strategies used in text messaging the lecturers. The decision on the students to be interviewed is based on theoretical sampling [3].

Procedure of Data Collection

Researchers requested the participants’ (the lecturers) consent as for them to agree to forward the text messages sent to and by the students’ related to the information requested by the students.

Subject of the Study

The participants of this study are:

1. The lecturers of English Department, Faculty of Culture Studies, Universitas Brawijaya. Referring to the theoretical sampling in [3], the participants were selected under three criteria: the first category is lecturers with working period (experience) more than 20 years (senior lecturers), the second category is lecturers whose working period is between 10 to 20 years, and the last category is the lecturers with working period less than 10 years (junior lecturers). In this study, the snowball sampling was applied.

2. The students who send text messages to the lecturers during the period of data collection.

Data Analysis

The following is the method of analysing the data:

1. Data Reduction. After the data had been transcribed, selection based on the focus of this study, which text messages containing request and information were done. There were 149 text messages which were then reduced into 141 data. There were 8 text messages that were sent by non-English Department students. Then coding was conducted based on the politeness strategies used.

2. Data Display. The coded data was analysed using both descriptive and explanatory matrixes. The text messages were explained based on Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies and were cross-checked with the result of interview.

3. Conclusion Drawing. The researchers drew conclusion based on the result of analysis.

4. Verification. To avoid bias in the result of the research, the data must be verified. The purpose of verifying the data is to check the trustworthiness, the validity and the reliability of the data. The technique used in verifying the data was triangulation. Exclusive reliance on one method may be biased and distort the researcher’s picture of the particular slice of reality she is investigating [7]. The use of two or more methods of data collection was taken. Therefore, triangulation, which can enhance transferability, was done to guarantee the valid result. The triangulation was done by peer debriefing to analyze and compare the results of the study with researcher’s friends discussing similar topic. Authors in [8] stated that peer debriefing may be aimed at helping the researcher to probe biases, to explore meanings, to clarify basis for interpretation. For this research, peer debriefing was done by giving some debriefers the summary of the study and letting them read the summary for some days. Afterwards, a session of debriefing was held. Some comments, criticisms, and suggestion from the parts of debriefers were taken into account.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This following section describes the finding of the study, which answers the research problems, and the discussion related to the results of analysis.

1. The politeness strategies in requesting and giving information used by English Department students when sending in their messages to the lecturers in Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya

After analyzing the data, 141 data were identified. The data were the utterances containing Face-Threatening Acts found in the students’ text messages sent to their lecturers when they request for information as well as give information. The data were categorized based on the theory of strategies in performing FTA proposed by Brown and Levinson [1].

Face-threatening acts were occurring when the speaker actions threatened the addressee’s face in the communication because the speaker did not pay attention to the addressee’s desires or wants, even the freedom of acts. Furthermore, the speaker could minimize the damage of his/her act to addressee or to the speaker itself by having strategy in performing FTAs.

Data analysis suggests that FTAs were performed by the students of English Department when texting their lecturers through one way: on record strategy. On-record strategy was represented in baldly, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategies. In this study, there were many text messages, which were included into on-record strategies. It was indicated by students’ acts, which were performed to minimize damage to addressees.

Based on the data, on record were performed quantitatively, baldly ranks the first (71 data), while negative politeness ranks the second (67 data), and positive politeness ranks the third (2 data). Meanwhile, off-record strategies were not found. The on record strategies and its supporting data are presented as follows:

A. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness strategy sought to minimize the threats of hearer’s positive face. This strategy is used when the speaker attempts to minimize the damage on H’s positive face. It includes statements of friendship, solidarity, compliments, etc. The following excerpt contains positive politeness used by a student.

Student : Askum.wr.wb. Ms. I, how are you? I hope everything is going well. Tomorrow, I would like to submit my proposal revision if Ms. IW doesn’t mind.
Lecturer : I am fine. TQ. Okay. You can put it on my table.

The above excerpt expresses a situation when the student tries to seek an agreement whether or not the addressee agrees with his offer by saying “…if Ms. IW doesn’t mind.” The S threatened the H’s positive face and uses positive politeness strategy to minimize the threat.

B. Negative Politeness Strategy

Negative face is threatened when someone does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their addressee’s freedom of action. By performing negative politeness strategy, it is implied that speaker has an effort to minimize the threats toward the hearer’s negative face and emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the hearer. In this study, 67 utterances containing FTA strategy on negative politeness strategy were found. Some examples are displayed in the following.

Student : Assalamualaikum, ma’am sblmx minta maaf ma’am. Hari ini saya mau KRSan, ibu bisa saya temui jam brapa njeh?.
Using negative politeness strategy, most of the text messages use an apology (strategy 6) prior to their actual purpose of texting. However, the signals used are various. Some students use the word “maaf” (‘sorry’) showing an apology or softened their request by saying “(mohon) maaf sebelumnya bu” which is a phrase generally used for asking permission before one’s saying something to another being respected. Negative politeness functioning as mitigating a request are also represented by the use of “kira-kira” (‘approximately’) which asserts that the speaker does not want to force his wants to the hearer. For instance, one said “.... Sya mau konsultasi proposal sy, sjauh ini sdh smpai bab 3 dan sdh sy knsultkn ke bu Ismarita Ida. Kira2 kpn sya bsa brtm lpkn untuk knsul? Trimksh.” The word “kira-kira” is used for softening the request about when the student can meet the lecturer for a consultation. Instead of saying “Apa saya bisa bertemu dengan bapak besok utk konsul” (which implies that the student wants to meet his lecturer in the next day), he uses “kira-kira kapan saya bisa bertemu dengan bapak utk konsul”.

In one of the text messages, one student humbles himself and tries to raise the lecturer as the hearer. In Brown and Levinson’s theory, this is a strategy called giving deference (strategy 5) of negative politeness in which the speaker humbles and abases himself in one condition and in another; he raises the hearer, trying to satisfy the hearer’s wants to be treated as superior. This is represented in the following request, “maaf sbelumnya mam jika d perbolehkn saya mau minta ijin ke mam apakah boleh sya mnhadap mam pd awal semester nanti mam? Mohon konfirmasi ny mam ya. Trima kasih mam.” In this context, the student tries to humble himself by using words and phrases as “maaf” (sorry), “jika diperbolehkan” (if it is all right), “minta ijin” (ask permission), and “mohon” (please). It is apparent that the student is willing to pay his lecturer positive face of a particular kind, namely that which satisfies the lecturer’s want to be treated as superior.

However, there is a student who adresses her lecturer as ‘anda’ which means that the address seems very formal and sounds strange. In Indonesian context, the word ‘anda’ is used when someone regards himself to have a gap with the person she or he is talking to. When requesting for information from their lecturers, some students avoid conflict by softening their request by saying “maaf” which literally means sorry. Almost all students end their messages by saying ‘thank you’ to give a sign that they really respect the teacher and this might also addressed to make their request sound polite thus they will get the expected answer.

C. Bald on-Record Strategy

Bald on-record strategy is performed when the speaker does not attempt to minimize the threats of addressee’s face. When bald on-record strategy is used, it can shock or embarrass the addressee, so this strategy is most often used in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the audience, such as family or close friends [1]. In this study, there were 71 utterances, which were categorized into, bald on record. There would be some examples and explanations how students performed baldly and the context of performing this strategy.

Student : Selamat siang bu, hari ini tidak k kampus? Andarini.
Lecturer : (no reply)

Student : Bu, apa saya bisa bertemu sekarang? Saya mau minta tanda untuk SP.
Lecturer : Oh maaf saya sedang ada kelas di fakultas lain, besok saja ya.

Student : Bu ke kampus ga hari ini?sayaa mau minta tanda tangan krs. Terima kasih bu.
Lecturer : (no reply)
In the above samples, students mostly use direct way of asking question without employing any mitigating devices to soften their language and it may threaten the lecturers’ face. They tend to ask directly the topic at issue without firstly use some ways to soften the language. Lectures reading their texts may find that these text messages are irritating and sounds impolite. These text messages create pressure to the hearer as it seems like a command. In this context, students threaten H’s negative face and use bald on-record strategy without minimizing the threat.

In giving information to the lecturers, the students also tend to directly mention their intention without softening the statement. For example, in the sentence “Selamat sore bu, saya Agung, semhas saya dilaksanakan pada hari rabu pkl.11.00 di FIB 2.6”, the student merely informs the lecturer the time of his result seminar, without using any mitigating device.

In the context of requesting information to the lecturers, the students do not want to satisfy the lecturers’ face. The use of, for instance, “Bagaimana dengan draft laporan KKN kelompok saya? Apakah sudah dikoreksi?” and “Selamat pagi, Bu. Apa laporan KKN kami sudah bisa diambil?” threaten the hearer’s face since they show that the students give command to the lecturer to check their report result, and they want to confirm whether the marking has been finished. These are not appropriate to be addressed to the lecturer.

In a text stating “Nilai intro to lit saya dapat D. Bu bisaakah minta tolong ibu tanyakan ke pak andi kenapa saya dapat D? padahal saya setiap hari masuk dan tugask2 tidak pernah lupa. Terimakasih Bu Eni.”, even though the utterance uses the word ‘minta tolong’ (please) and ‘terima kasih’ as the mitigating devices, this remains a bald on record. The reason is that the student (the sender) makes a request in an open and direct way by asking the lecturer (the receiver) to ask another lecturer why he received grade D in one of his courses, while students generally need to confirm their grade by themselves.

2. The description on the difference of strategies that students use when they make request to senior and junior lecturers

From the finding, it was found that politeness strategies were used similarly to address both senior and junior lecturers.

In the case of positive politeness strategies, the treatment given to senior and junior lecturers is similar. For example, a student tried to save the lecturer’s face by using an opening “how are you? I hope everything is going well” before delivering her intention. In another context, the student uses the phrase ‘kalau tidak keberatan’ (if you don’t mind) to soften her request.

Regarding negative politeness strategies, either addressed to the senior or the junior lecturers, there is no difference in the text messages. From the finding, it can be inferred that mostly, students will start the text by greeting, then saying “maaf / kira-kira” (sorry, possibly…) before stating their purpose of texting. They generally close the text by thanking.

Moreover, in Indonesia context, it is assumed that bald on record strategy might apply differently when students send text to the senior and junior lecturers since people will respect the older people, culturally. However, the finding suggests that bald on record strategies are used equally, which means that there is no difference of the strategy use when texting senior or junior lecturers. For example, in the utterance “Bu Ida pkl brp hari ini ke kampus? Saya mau konsultasi” and “Mam sya Lusi sya sudah di malang. Mam bisa konsultasi skripsi hari apa mam? Trmksh”, the students do not use any signals to soften their requests. They directly mention their purpose without softening their language.

3. The description on the response of the lecturers towards the text messages sent by their students

An interview was conducted in order to gain some opinions related to the text messages that the students send to their lecturers when requesting for information and giving information. After conducting the interview, some more information are then gained.

First, all lecturers agree on certain code of conduct that students need to pay attention when sending SMS to their lecturers. The code of conduct consists of some general rules that students have to pay attention when texting their lecturers. Students are expected to give greeting, to mention their names, to mention their purpose of texting, and to
say thanks. Those rules are necessary as the context of texting is still related to academic context, thus the expectation of being polite is very much needed. Some expressions like “Ma’am anda dimana?” (datum 35), Sudah saya taruh di meja materi sama handbooknya barusan (datum 93) are inappropriate as the students give a threat to lecturer’s face. They do not even use some mitigating devices in such a way that the lecturer will feel easy when reading their messages. They treat the lecturer in the same way like when they are treating their friends. They better use appropriate expression so that the hearer (H), in this case the lecturer, will find the message appropriate thus giving the answer upon the request delivered. Usually, the lecturers will give a reply of the SMS sent when they find out that the SMS is appropriate. On the other hand, when teacher’s face is threatened, they feel offended thus expecting a reply will be impossible. They will just leave and even forget the SMS they feel so imposing, demanding, and impolite. Still, some lecturers give a reply on some inappropriate SMS due to certain reasons, for example if the SMS is considered important or badly need an answer.

Next, the lecturers also comment on the way the students write the SMS. Some words like aku (datum 18), aww (datum 116), hiks (datum 56), askum (datum 121), anda (datum 35) are considered inappropriate. Students have to be aware of the receiver of their messages. In other words, they have to consider to whom they write. As lecturers are people that are supposed to be respected, those words are irritating. Regardless whether or not texting is supposed to be brief and efficient, still using inappropriate acronym when writing SMS to their lecturers are threatening the lecturer’s face.

Another lecturer also said that today’s students are getting more and more selfish. They just regard their needs fulfilled without thinking about other’s need. What is the most important for them is the way to satisfy their need. Take the following example “Salam. Maaf bu eni ini saya ferdi sekedar memberitahukan saja Bu, pagi ini pukul 10 saya berencana konsultasi Bab I. terimakasih Bu.” (datum 27). This SMS is too imposing, meaning that the lecturer should be ready for a meeting without even considering whether or not the lecturer is available on the time mentioned. Similar case can be found in datum 52 “Selamat sore. Saya NF, sastra inggris 2012. Saya mau menyerahkan KRS. Ibu hari ini ada jam berapa? Saya sudah didepan ruang ibu.” Another example is “Selamat pagi. Maaf ibu saya sudah berada di kampus untuk konsultasi skripsi dengan ibu. SBL. Terimakasih.” (datum 133). The SMS is categorized into such hasty message as it seems that the student feels so impatient about meeting the lecturers. She should wait patiently considering that there might be an important meeting that the lecturer have to attend or maybe the lecturer is still on their way to the office. Saying that way brings an intention of being too impatient for waiting while as a student waiting for a lecturer is a usual thing. Therefore, the above SMS shows how selfish the speaker is.

Last, the lecturers agree to say that not all the students behave inappropriately; there are some who still pay attention to the general rules on the relationship between lecturers and students. Thus, they just assume that this phenomenon is just lack of knowledge that students have especially when dealing with lecturers and students interaction. Then a suggestion is derived. They suggest the faculty to give more emphasis on the lesson of ethics, that is the rules of conduct that students must know when dealing with lecturer–students relationship. This can be done when students are entering the faculty as freshmen. They usually get some introduction on campus life and its elements through the program of PK2MABA, one of which is discussing about the ethics that students have to pay attention to when dealing with lecturer–student relationship.

4. The description on the students’ opinion concerning the politeness strategies they use

To get the objective view on the study conducted, some opinions from the students were also gained concerning the politeness strategy they perform when sending SMS to their lecturers. The followings are some opinions collected from students.

In the first place, some students surprisingly do not even know that their SMS threaten the lecturer’s face. Take a look on the following SMS “Selamat malam mam, saya NF (sasing 2010) ingin konsultasi masalah skripsi saya. Kira kira kapan saya bisa menemui anda ma’am?” (datum 137). After being confirmed, the student still regards that her SMS sounds polite. The use of the word “anda” shows that she deliberately expresses her respect. The student thinks that the teacher has more power than her; therefore, the word “anda” is chosen to signify distance between them. However, when she was being asked on using the word “ibu or bapak”, she then realized that using the word “ibu or bapak” instead of anda will sound nicer. Another example is “Iyaa bu nanti aku kesana” (datum 18). The student said that the language is fine and there is nothing wrong with it. Then after being assured that the language sounds inappropriate especially when it is dealing with texting the lecturers, she then just realized that she was supposed to
say that. From this phenomenon then it can be assumed that the way the students write messages to their lecturers and the way they choose the word there, are due to their lack of knowledge.

The issue of whether or not students have differences when texting senior and junior lecturers were also addressed. The respondents said that they had just the same way of texting those two types of lecturers. They deliberately said that nothing is different when texting those two. They said that they never think about whether the lecturer belongs to the senior or junior one, when texting them. The response then confirms the finding stating that the students do not apply different strategy when texting the senior and junior one.

DISCUSSION

This section is the discussion regarding the result of the analysis based on the objectives of the study, which are to identify the FTA strategies performed by the students when texting their lecturers, the different strategies that the students apply when texting senior and junior lecturers, and the responses of the lecturers and the students toward the strategies used.

Based on the data, on record were performed quantitatively, baldly ranks the first (71 data), while negative politeness ranks the second (67 data), and positive politeness ranks the third (2 data). Bald on record was found on 71 data as most students use direct strategy when texting their lecturers so that it causes embarrassment or shocking feeling once the hearer got the SMS. Bald on record strategy is followed by negative face, which is threatened when someone does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their addressee’s freedom of action. By performing negative politeness strategy, it is implied that speaker has an effort to minimize the threats toward the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. However, when texting the lecturers, the students use some mitigating devices like “kira-kira”, “maaf”, “mohon maaf” to soften their language so that their messages will not be too imposing on the hearer’s face. Lastly, positive politeness strategy (2 data) is also used by the students when they seek for an agreement.

Addressing the issue on the difference use of strategy when students texting their lecturers, this current study found out that there is no different strategy that the students use when texting their lecturers. In terms of positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategy, and bald on record strategy, the strategies applied to senior and junior lecturers are equal. It indicates that seniority does not give any significant effects which then affect students to use different strategy.

Related to the responses given by the lecturers regarding the strategy that the students use when texting their lecturers, it was found that there are some points to consider dealing with this issue. First, lecturers suggest students to apply certain code of conduct that is a set of general rules that students have to apply when texting their lecturers. Next, the way students write and the choice of words should be taken into account as it may affect the lecturers’ feeling in an unfavourable way. The issue on the selfishness performed by the students when texting their lecturers is also addressed here. Thus, students should learn how to regard other people’s feeling especially when it deals with their own importance. In addition, lecturers agree on strengthening students awareness on the ethics performed in academic setting. This can be done at the very beginning of the semester or even inserting an ethics lesson in one of the courses students get in campus.

The last issue that this study concerned on is the students’ response toward the politeness strategy that the students perform when texting their lecturers. There are some things to ponder concerning this issue. First, in fact students do not even know that their SMS threaten the lecturer’s face. They just regard their SMS as the polite one as they do not say something bad which makes the lecturers feel offended. This reality shows that there is a discrepancy of knowledge that the lecturers and students have on the term politeness itself, especially on the terms related to students-lecturer interaction. Next, it is evident that students regard the senior and junior lecturers in the same way, which can be seen from the similar strategies students use when texting these two categories of lecturers.

Compared to the study results of [2], the findings of this present study reveals similar facts. Author in [2] found that the Arab students had not acquired enough pragma linguistic knowledge and their emails were influenced by the mode of phone message writing style. Some expressions used in emails between students and supervisors were unacceptable because of the pragmatic transfer of the Arabic writing. In terms of the request strategies, the results proved that mostly Arab students preferred to be more direct in their requests. This is similar to the finding of this present study, which proves that students of English Study Programs in Faculty of Cultural Studies mostly used
direct strategies (bald on record) in texting their lecturers, and the students’ text messages are unacceptable to some extent. However, it has also been revealed from this study that students also used many negative politeness strategies, in which they use the word “maaf” (sorry) and alike.

In Indonesian context, a previous study conducted by [9] also found out that four politeness strategies in text messages of the students of English are applied. In his study, negative politeness strategy is dominantly used. However, the students’ texts cannot reflect appropriateness in interpersonal communication because those texts are inconsistent with politeness theory, which states that lower status member tend to be relatively indirect (polite) in their communication to higher status superior. These problems can be triggered by the students’ lack of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence.

CONCLUSION

This study has found 141 data of text messages, and from that number, bald on record strategy took the biggest number of the total usage, followed by negative politeness, and positive politeness as the least strategy used. The use of bald on record strategy means most students use direct strategy when texting their lecturers and it threatens the lecturers’ face, while the negative politeness strategy shows that students made an effort to minimize the threats toward the lecturers’ negative face and emphasized avoidance of imposition on the lecturer. Positive politeness strategy was used by the students for seeking for an agreement.

The strategies used in texting junior or senior lecturers are not so different. In terms of positive politeness, negative politeness strategy, and bald on record strategy, the strategies applied to senior and junior lecturers are similar, indicating that seniority does not necessarily give any significance regarding students’ text messages. From the results of interview, it can be concluded that students’ writing and the choice of words should be taken into account as it may affect the lecturers’ feeling in an unfavourable way.

One of the recommendations that can be offered to help the students in dealing with this issue is providing ‘a lesson on ethics’ in academic setting at the beginning of their study in the university, possibly by inserting the lesson in the students’ orientation. Students need to examine whether or not the text messages are appropriate. Students need to focus on the actual request language and on understanding the way it differs, and they need to practice on it.

REFERENCES