Teachers' Linguistic Politeness in Classroom Interaction:
A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

This study aimed to uncover the different structures of linguistic politeness used in the utterances of the teachers in classroom interaction. More specifically, the analysis made use of House and Kasper's (1981) Politeness Linguistic Expressions, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Strategies, and Leech's (1983) Politeness Maxims. Using observation and interview, several structures of linguistic politeness were unearthed. Firstly, the politeness linguistic expressions involved politeness markers, consultative devices, downtoners, committers, forewarning, hesitators, and agent avoider. Secondly, the politeness strategies involved positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record strategy, and bald-on record strategy. Lastly, the politeness maxims involved tact, approbation, modesty, and agreement maxim. Politeness is a non-value-laden linguistic phenomenon where it does not always mean what people in the here-and-now take it to mean, but there can always be a conventional ways of expressing so in a particular social interaction. The structures of linguistic politenesss do not always lead to conflict-avoidance, but they only contribute to the success of the effect of the expressions used. Hence, whatever may seem to have been considered as conventionally conventionalized or non-conventionalized politeness in a context, several factors must need to be considered for an expression to be a form of politeness strategy that performs supportive facework.

Keywords: politeness, pragmatic analysis, teachers, linguistic expressions, strategies, maxims, Philippines

1. Introduction

1.1 Literature Review

One of the topics in pragmatics that has received so much attention is the use of politeness among teachers in classroom interaction. Politeness serves as a tool to show respect in all social discourses (Yusuf & Anwar, 2019; Sapitri et al., 2020) and serves as a conflict-avoidance framework (Leech, 1983) in the classroom. It comprises of several linguistic structures and strategies that bear distinct language and even culture (Ardi et. al., 2018). Considering that teachers and students have different communication style, these linguistics structures and strategies are necessary to counter face-aggravating actions that intentionally assault each other's public self-image (Bousfield and Locher, 2008 & Culpeper, 2005), thereby allowing smooth communication and harmonious classroom interactions between them (Tan et al., 2016). Not only that it teaches us the significance of communicative competence but also values (Fitriyani and Andriyanti, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted to discuss politeness in educational context, particularly teacher-students interaction. In fact, Widiandnya et. al (2018) explored the implication of politeness stategies used in classroom interaction. The results revealed that they improve interactions as they create respect and value. As Ambarwati et al. (2019) presupposed, politeness strategies show how people choose appropriate expressions and save interlocutors' fundamental positive social value and social entitlement (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Furthermore, Watts (2003) emphasized that several politeness linguistic expressions, as identified by House and Kasper (1981), can be used to maintain the face or public self-image, namely politeness markers, hedgers, committers, etc. They are used to lower the degree of impositions on the addressee and keep the harmony in the interaction process, which is consistent with the result of the study of Indirana et al., (2019) stating that the use of these linguistic politeness can keep the teaching and learning process to run smoothly in class. Not only that this breeds good impression but, more importantly, promotes harmony in the classroom (Pratama, 2019).

Another study conducted by Rahayuningsih et. al. (2020) has uncovered the various politeness strategies used by the teachers in classroom interaction. The results revealed that all types of politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) were found such as positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record strategy, and off-record stratgey. Undoubtedly, the use of these strategies affect students' performance and self-esteem positively as concluded in the study of Hassan et al., (2017). Specifically, their politeness makes them avoid from criticizing, ordering, threatening, complaining, and whatnot; rather, it helps them become apologetic, thankful, accepting, etc. (Brown and Levinson, 2011). This is further supported by Widiadnya, Seken, and Santosa (2018) stating that politeness makes efficient teaching and learning process and helps build respect and communication between teacher and students, which is consistent with the result of the study conducted by Atmowardoyo, Weda, and Nashruddin (2018), on the use of politeness maxims. It was revealed that these maxims are used to realize togetherness and respect with students and positive attitude towards a lesson. The maxims used involved

tact maxim, approbation maxim, generosity maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. They also added that the use of these maxims motivate students to be even more active in the teaching and learning process.

1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to describe not only the various linguistic expressions but also the politeness strategies and maxims used by the teachers in the classroom interaction. Such purpose is operationally carried using House and Kasper's (1981) Politeness Linguistic Expressions, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Strategies, and Leech's (1983) Politeness Maxims. Without a doubt, by uncovering the various linguistic expressions, politeness strategies, and politeness maxims, this study can bring light on how speech acts form a structure and establish evidence to meaning. Taking into account the variety of intellectual, social, cultural, and environmental factors that this study encompasses, not only the teachers but also the general populace will benefit as this is of help in making them become informed and responsible individuals in all arenas of discourse.

1.3 Research Significance

This study can serve as an actual data for teachers and students to work with themselves either as a prototype or, more important, to further upon or differ with to provide an intellectual feast at the table of real-life events. Specifically, in the context language teaching, this foregrounds intercultural communicative competence and values education, where teacher and students become mediator and diplomats, able to view different culture from a perspective of informed understanding. On a larger scale, politeness can help improve relationships with others through respecting the fundamental values people claim for themselves or their public self-image as persons. Without a doubt, the stipulations entail curriculum integration, which can be approached in the following areas: social psychology, sociology, history, media studies, and social history, to name a few.

1.4 Rationale and Research Gap

Although there have been relatively considerable number of publications about politeness in academic context, most of the studies only account on providing the types of politenss strategy used. This study offers a different dimension from previous researches as this accounts the politeness linguistic expressions and politeness maxims used. Further, research on the politeness it still very substantial and relevant as it is not something people are born with, but something they have to learn and live up with as this helps respect each other and one another and avoid conflict in the interaction process. Such has also been the topic of debate in the area of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and social theory (Watts, 2003), to name but a few. Also, politeness is a socially contructed concept that is highly culture-specific. What one cuture considers as polite may be eccentric in other cultures Carolus et. al., (2019). Hence, politeness should still be studied.

2. Method

The method falls under pragmatic analysis. This grows out of the philosophy of Paul Grice (1989), John Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969). Specifically, it examines how people do things with words and how they interpret what others are doing when they speak. Since the focus of the study is to uncover the structure of linguistic politeness in the utterances of the teachers in classroom interaction, the study made use of House and Kasper's (1981) Politeness Linguistic Expressions, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Strategies, and Leech's (1983) Politeness Maxims. In analyzing the data, the researchers made us of Miles and Huberman's (1984) steps on descriptive analysis. The steps involve [1] data reduction, [2] data display, and [3] conclusion and verification.

2.1 Politeness Linguistic Expressions

House and Kasper (1981) have provided several linguistic politeness expressions that are used to signal politeness in a discourse. These have also been used by a number of researchers in their own work (e.g. Trosborg, 1987). These expressions were then used to identify the politeess linguisic expressions used in the classroom interaction context, specifically in teachers' utterances. These expressions include politeness markers, play-downs, consultative devices, hedges, understaters, downtoners, committers, forewarning, hesitators, scope-staters, and agent- avoiders.

2.2. Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies include positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record strategy, and off-record strategy. These strategies are addressed to the hearer's positive and negative face. Firstly, positive politeness addresses the positive face of the hearer. They can be realized by making them feel that they are being appreciated and approved of by others. Further, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose three board strategies of positive politeness: claim common ground, convey that the speaker and the hearer are cooperators, and fulfil the hearer's wants for some X. Secondly, negative politeness is defined as 'redressive action' which is used to address hearer's negative face. It aims to reduce the interference with the hearer's freedom of action by means of being indirect, using hedges, and reducing imposition, to name a few. Thirdly, bald-on record is employed to express a message directly to the hearer. Here, the utterances are expressed directly and umambiguously. Lastly, the off-record strategy allows speaker to execute FTA indirectly where his utterance can consist of a myriad of interpretion. Using these strategies, the speakers can then be able to prevent threatening acts to the hearer's face or at least minimize or soften it.

2.3 Politeness Maxims

There are six maxims of politeness principle introduced by Leech (1983). These maxims are employed to substantiate relationship between the sense and force in day to day interaction. These include the following: tact maxim, which minimizes cost to other and

maximizes benefit to other; generosity maxim, which minimizes benefit to self and maximizing cost to self; approbation maxim, which minimizes dispraise of other and maximizes praise of other; modesty maxim, which mininmizes praise of self and maximizes dispraise of self; agreement maxim, which maximizes agreement between self and other people and minimize disagreement between self and other; and sympathy maxims, which minimize antipathy between self and other and maximize sympathy between self and other. In the context of this study, they are determined by identifying first the associated illocutionary forces.

2.4 Data Sources

The study used observation and interview to collect the linguistic data. A nine-hour observation was conducted to the three Senior High School teachers in a private institution. More specifically, they were observed for three consecutive days, one hour every day. The observation covered pre, during, and post interaction. The use of audio-recording was considered. The use was to ensure authenticity of the data and even shun the Halo or Hawthorne Effect where the participants tend to alter their behavior because they knew that they are being studied (Mackey & Gass, 2005). On the other hand, to attain triangulation, 10 Senior High School teachers were interviewed using unstructured interview.

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

As mentioned above, the data of this study were taken from the utterances and responses of Grade 12 Senior High School teachers in a private institution. For ethical consideration, first, a consent letter was sent to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Second, after the approval, another consent letter was sent to the participants. The letter addressed the researcher, institution, purpose, participants, condition on anonymity and confidentiality, data reporting, and dissemination. Third, we discussed what the study was all about and why they were chosen to be the participants. Fourth, we informed them of the schedule. It is also important to note that they were not forced to participate and were told that they can withdraw anytime from the activity. Lastly, the data collection commenced using voice recorders. This research patterned its data collection in the study of Dowlatabadi, Mehri, and Tajabadi (2014) on Politeness Strategies in Conversation Exchange where the researchers used [2] two recorders- one of which was placed on teacher's desks and was clearly out of the participants view; the other recorder was just with us as we just sat in the corner of the classroom. After which, the teachers' were then interviewed using unstructured interview questionnaire.

3. Results

3.1 Politeness Linguistic Expressions

House and Kasper's (1981) suggested categories of language structure that are used to show politeness. Here, the analysis focused on providing the politeness formulae to determine the linguistic expressions used. These linguistic expressions, despite being open to potential interpretation as 'polite', have been classied as polite and used by a number of researchers, for instance, Trosborg (1987). By virtue of the context of this study, there were 7 linguistic expressions present in the utterances of the teachers in their interactions such as politeness markers, consultative devices, downtoners, committers, hesitators, and agent avoider. Presented in Table 1 are the politeness formulae that signal the linguistic expressions as identified by House and Kasper (1981).

Table 1. Politeness Linguistic Expressions used in Classroom Interaction

Politeness Lingusitic Expressions	Politeness Formulae	Sample Utterances
Politeness Markers	Please Dear	Please calm down. We shall begin. Dear, please do note that this is how you do it…
Consultative Devices	What happened… Can someone…	What happened to you? Could you hear me our first?
Playdowns	I was wondering whether or…	I was wondering whether or… but if you're thinking of within this range of line of thinking, then that is the correct answer
Downtoners	Just	It's fine. It can't fail you. So just see me after the class, and let's talk about your reason
Committers	I think I guess In my opinion…	I think you can still elaborate it more. That can still be enhanced. Give me the source you have read. I guess I will have to try to read to achieve consensus. .. I think on my opinion this is how we should do it
Hesitator	uhhm	The correct answer is this but uhhm.. for example youre thinking of a different idea then that is the correct answer but for now that will not be the correct one. So what you're saying is this.. uhm.. my.. I think on my opinion this is how we should do it pero uhmm
Agent Avoiders	People are…	I respect your opinion. People are entitled to their opinion.

As shown in Table 1, several politeness structures were found in the utterances of the teachers. First, as most related studies would show,

'*please*' is among the widely used examples of politeness marker which is also observed in this study alongside the use of address form '*dear*'. The use of the expressions was for teachers to show deference to the students and ask for cooperation in the teaching and learning process. Second, playdown was observed in the utterance *'I was wondering whether or'* which was used by the teacher to done down the effect of his or her utterance to the students. In this case, the utterance makes student feel that he or she could be possibly right, and the teacher did not disregard his or her answer; even if so, student will not feel bad as his answer was considered. Third, consultative device was realized in the utterances '*What happened…' and 'could you hear…'* , and these forms were used to ask for cooperative action from the students to involve the teachers in the event of action. Fourth, downtoner was observed by means of using *'just'* which was used to intensify the impact of the teacher's utterance, to minimize the imposition of the teacher, to restrict somehow the extend of face threatening acts, and to avoid coercing the students. Fourth, the expressions *'I think', 'I will',* and *'I guess'* were used. Teachers used them to lower the impact to which they commit themselves to the propositional content of the utterance. With these expressions, students would appreciate them as they would feel regarded, notwithstanding the little disagreement. Fifth, hesitator was seen in the most widely used sample as *'uhmm'* which connotes that the teacher was also helping students to process out what they were saying as manifested in the utterance when teacher was trying to substantiate thoroughly his point and when the teacher was trying to make the student understand his point about his take on the student's answer. Of course, the use also comes with minimizing the imposition to the students. Lastly, agent-avoider was seen in the utterance *'people are…'*. The use was to move the criticism on the students to some generalize agent as *'people'* which connotes that student should feel right about his or her answer as it is his or her opinion, and everybody does it.

3.2 Politeness Strategies

The findings showed that four politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) were found in the utterances of the teachers in the classroom interaction. These include positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record strategy, and off-record strategy. The substrategies in each of the strategy involved the following: positive politeness involved use of in-group identity marker, intensify interest to the hearer, notice, attend to the hear, include both S and H in the activity, assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concerns for H's wants, seek agreement, and avoid disagreement; negative politeness involved be indirect and apologize to the person; bald-on record strategy involved no face redress in great urgency and metaphorical urgency for emphasis; and off-record strategy involved use of rhetorical questions and overgeneralize.

Table 2. Politeness Strategies in Classroom Interaction

Politeness Strategies	Sub-strategies	Sample Utterances
Positive Politeness	Use of in-group identity marker	Let's start guys. Class Dear, it's not done that way
	Intensify interest to the hearer	That's not our concern now but we could discuss that next time Alright. What is about so?
	Notice, attend to the hearer	Oh I see I didn't think of that… What happened to you? Give me the article you believe in and I will read it, and then let's decide
	Include both S and H in the activity	Let's just try our best. Let's not make things hard for us.
	Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concerns for H's wants	We've already had that question earlier but the answer for that is this What you're saying is this…
	Seek agreement	I think you have an idea but… Correct me if I'm wrong… Your answer is interesting, but let's put it this way
	Avoid disagreement	I respect your idea but.. You're almost there to the right answer.
Negative Politeness	Be indirect	Can someone please…?
	Apologize to the person	Oh! I'm very sorry..
Bald-on Record Strategy	Sympathethic warnings of advice	You can't expect me to answer all the time all your questions, esp when it's not relevant to our concern.
	No face redress in great urgency	Quiet! Let's listen to the discussant

	Metaphorical urgency for emphasis	Please! Listen....
Off-record strategy	Use of rhetorical questions	Do you really have to be so noisy?Is it always like this? I have observed that…
	Overgeneralize	I respect your opinion. People are entitled to their opinion.

As shown in Table 2, positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record strategy, and off-record strategy were evident. Firstly, teachers used positive politeness as they recognized that the students have desire to be respected or save their positive face. This was used to show closeness and solidarity which comes in different manifestations. First, the teachers use in-group identity markers, particulary address forms such as '*guys', 'class', and 'dear'*. This is used so the teachers can make students somehow feel that they are close, thereby implicitly claiming a common ground with the student that they belong to the same social group or community. Second, intensify interest to the hear was manifested in the utterances *'That's not our concern now but we could discuss that next time'* and *'Alright. What about so?*. Both signified that the teachers care to show interest by acknowledging the students' answer where they did not disregard the idea of the students but rather intensified by telling students that their concern will be tackled next meeting, thereby making them feel considered in the process. Third, notice attend to the hearer was seen in teachers' act of noticing students' wants which, in this case, to be asked about students current feeling as represented by the utterance *'what happened to you?'* and the answer be considered as represented by the utterances *'Oh I see I didn't think of that…'* and *'Give me the article you believe in and I will read it, and then let's decide'*. Fourth, the teachers made students feel that they can do things together as indicated by inclusive *'let us'* instead of saying *'you' or'me'*, i.e., including both S and H in the activity. Fifth, teachers assert or presuppose their knowledge of and concerns for students' wants by making students want to fit theirs. For instance, notwithstanding the disapproval conveyed in the utterance '*What you're saying is this…'*, it conveys teacher's sensitivity to the want of the student for his or her answer to rationalized and be understood by not only the teacher but also the other students. The same is true in the utterance *'we've already had that question earlier but the answer for that is this'* as this shows that teacher did not neglect student's query although it had already been asked. Sixth, teachers sought agreement to students' response. Here, *'I think you have an idea but...*', *'your answer is interesting, but let's put it this way,* and '*Correct me if I'm wrong…'* signify teachers' want to look for ways in which they could agree with the students to consider their want to be right. Here, the altruistic goal to please the student is to offer extra attention in the form of showing approval or agreement. Lastly, '*I respect your idea but…'* involves token agreement where the teacher twisted his or her utterance so as to look to agree and fur disagreement, rather than saying blatant *'no'*. Also, the utterance '*You're almost there to the right answer'* signifies teacher's want for student to feel that he was somehow on the track, and he just needed to much tending on the elaboration to be able to get to the right answer. Without a doubt, this can keep students' enthusiasm to participate in the teaching and learning process as he was considered, and he did make a sense.

Secondly, in terms of negative politeness, it was used to heighten negative face through demonstrating the distance between the distance between the teachers and student and avoid intervening on each other's niche or so-called territory. Its substrategies include be indirect and apologize to the person. The former was seen in utterance '*Can someone please…?'* which not only used the modal verb *'can'* but also interrogative form to express indirect request to the student. On the other hand, the latter was realized when teacher applied the expression of apologizing through *'sorry'*.

Thirdly, in terms of bald-on record strategy, the strategy was used to directly address the teachers' want from their students and immediately realize it. This strategy did not require the teacher to put much effort in reducing the impact of the FTA's. However, this is only observed when you are comfortable with your environment and you know each other very well. This is observed in the following scenario. First, the teacher used no face redress in great urgeny through *'Quiet…'*. It is considered as polite as teacher and students have great deal of understanding in the process that they have to be quiet when someone is talking which signals great urgency. Second, the teacher used metaphorical urgency for emphasis through the utterance '*Please! Listen'* to signal that the teacher wanted the students to give focus and attention. Here, 'listen' is what indicates the maximum efficiency which is to make them pay attention to her immediately. Lastly, the utterance *'You can't expect me to answer all the time all your questions, esp when it's not relevant to our concern'* bears the sympathetic advice or warning. In this case, the teacher was directly giving student a warning about knowing his limitations in the class that it is not all the time, whenever he wants, that a teacher can tend to him, especially when it is not even relevant to the occurring situation, even more so when a question is under the latitude of disrespect.

Lastly, in terms of off-record strategy, it was employed to use indirect language that gets rid of the teacher from the potential to be imposing. Here, the use of rhetorical questions and overgeneralize were employed. The former was realized in the utterance *'Do you really have to be so noisy?Is it always like this? I have observed that…'*. The teacher somehow infringed what is true. It can be inferred that the teacher purposely employed the strategy to form a vague or hanging answer. On the other hand, overgeneralize was realized in the utterance *'people are entitled to their opinion'*. Here, instead of mentioning only the name of the students, the teacher rather addressed as a whole. It is a good strategy as teacher is telling indirectly to the student to continue sharing his point regardless how it will be viewed by the audience because at the end of the day, he is entitled to express what he wants to express. Hence, the involved student feels respected.

3.4 Politeness Maxims

Politeness maxims are set of rules for a speaker to follow when he/she intends to be polite. As proposed by Leech (1983), there are 6 politeness maxims. However, in the context of this study, teachers only used tact maxim and approbation maxim as shown in Table 3 below. Illocutionary forces were also identified in order to identify the type of maxim used.

Table 3. Politeness Maxims in Classroom Interaction

Politeness Maxims	Illocutionary forces	Sample Utterances
Tact Maxim	Offering	Give me the article you believe in and I will read it
	Suggesting	okay that is not within the scope of our lesson, but we will try to discuss that later
	Requesting	Correct me if I'm wrong...
Approbation Maxim	Acknowledging	Your answer is interesting…
	Complimenting	Oh I see I didn't think of that…
Modesty Maxim	Apologizing	Oh! I'm very sorry..
Agreement Maxim	Stating	Your answer is interesting, but let's put it this way

As shown in Table 3, several politeness maxims were found. Firstly, teachers used tact maxim by means of frequently used illocutionary forces such as offering, suggesting, and requesting. They are under Searle's (1969) directive speech act which conspicuously aims at provoking an action from the students. Here, the teacher used indirect directive speech act as represented by the following: *'Give me the article you believe in and I will read it'* or offering, where the teacher, instead of succumbing to rejecting student's answer, he or she took it and offer to read student's reference; *'okay that is not within the scope of our lesson, but we will try to discuss that later'* or suggesting, where the teacher attended to student's want for his or her answer be at least considered and assured him or her that the answer will still be addressed and rationalized; and '*correct me if I'm wrong'*, where the students should correct the teacher, should the teacher misunderstand student's point. Without a doubt, the teacher used tact maxim to maximize benefit to the students. Secondly, the teachers used approbation maxim by means of acknowledging and complimenting. The illocutionary force '*acknowledging'* was used for teacher not to disregard student's answer and make his student feel somehow confident by saying '*your answer is interesting'*. On the other hand*,* the illocutionary force '*complimenting'* was used to praise students by giving a good answer which the teacher has not accounted. It only shows that approbation maxim was used by the teachers to avoid dispraise and express approval to the students. Thirdly, modesty maxim was used in the form an apology or by saying *'sorry'* which highlights teachers' effort to maximize dispraise of himself and evaluation of self. Lastly, agreement maxim was used for teachers to avoid disagreement although it may not be absolute as represented by *'Your answer is interesting, but...'*. The disagreement is shrouded by partial agreement which is of help in avoiding discouragement or embarrassment from the students.

4. Discussion

The use of the linguistic expressions as shown in Table 1 comes in various reasons. First, teachers used politeness markers to consider students' positive face or his/her desire to be appreciated by others which show friendliness and solidarity (Najafabadi & Paramasivam, 2012) and which show the sociolinguistic competence of the teachers (Tamimi Sa'd & Mohammadi, 2014). Second, playdowns are used to soften the perlocutionary effect of teachers' utterance (House & Kasper, 1983; Watts, 2003). It is important as the effect might carry face-threatening acts which devalue students' positive social value they claim for themselves. Third, consultative devices are used to get the cooperation of the students by means of interrogative forms of utterances (House & Kasper, 1981; Trosborg, 1995; Watts, 2003) and are used to sound like a consultation rather than imposing a request (Tajjedin & Pezeshki, 2014). Fourth, downtoners are used to tone down the impact of the teachers' utterances by using *'just'*, for example, in asking favors (House and Kasper, 1981; Wijayanto, 2014). Fifth, committers are used to subordinate the degree to which the the teachers entrust themselves to the propositional content of the utterance (House & Kasper, 1981; Watts, 2003) and are used to propose an offer or a promise (Tajjedin & Pezeshki, 2014) which suffices the students' positive face want to share common understanding with some goals with the teacher (Goody, 1978). Sixth, the hesitators are used to imply uncertainty, hesitation, disagreement, but they are considered as polite by virtue of their characteristic as a form of negative politeness (Wijayanto, 2014) where students' negative face want or freedom from imposition is considered. Lastly, the use agent-avoider stems on its form as a negative politeness that is used to reduce the burden on the students and to demonstrate solidarity between the teachers and students (Sembiring & Sianturi, 2019; Yusuf & Anwar, 2019). In addition, the results are consistent with the frequently used forms of politeness linguistic expressions identified by Watts (2003) such as politeness markers and committers. They are used to lower the degree the imposition on the addressee.

While it is true that there can be several conventionalized linguistic expressions that can be used to mark politeness, they are also open to potential interpretation as 'polite', particularly in the case of non-conventionalized linguistic expressions that are based on implications. Structures as these are not normally perceived as overt expression of politeness, notwithstanding its contribution to make supportive contributions towards facework. If they are seen to be extra of what is vital to maintain the politic behavior of an interaction, they become open to evaluation as 'polite' (Watts, 2003). Hence, even if they are formulaic ritualized utterances, no linguistic expressions can be immediately considered as forms of politeness, but they can, undoubtedly, provide helpful faceworks that can prevent non-threatening acts to surface and nevertheless important important demarcations to interpret whether the interacts remain within the scope of politic behavior or violate it.

As shown in the results section, several politeness strategies were used. The positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off-record strategy. There strategies were used by the teachers to prevent face threatening acts to the students' face or minimize it. Firstly, the use of positive politeness strategies is to exude closeness, solidarity, friendship, and connectedness in their utterances (Togatorop, 2019) which are of help to maintain a positive and consistent self-image among students. It is also used to attain lively classroom atmosphere (Nurmawati, Atmowardoyo, and Weda, 2019) and as a reward or reinforcement to the students to increase their motivation in the teaching and learning process (Nugrahanto & Hartono, 2020). Secondly, teachers used negative polite strategy to minimize imposition on the students' freedom from imposition (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Its form as being indirect by means of using modal contributes to a less stressful classroom environment as students are given freedom of choices (Peng, Xie, and Cai, 2014). Further, negative politeness strategies are what is often used to consider age difference, institutional postion, power, and social distance which is evident in the case of teacher and students in the classroom (Fitriyani and Andriyanti, 2020). Thirdly, bald-on record strategy, although the teachers did not try to minimize face threats to the students' face, it is considered as polite as this strategy works if the speaker has more power and position than the hearer in the situation (Pasaribu, Saragih & Gea, 2021). In this case, teachers have more power and have higher status than the students (Khusnia, 2017), and they perform so by using imperatives. Lastly, teachers used off-record strategy to maintain students' negative face by allowing students to interpret several meanings from their utterances which are rather vague or ambiguous (Pasaribu, Saragih, & Gea, 2021). In addition, compared to other strategies employed, politeness strategies were frequently used by the teachers, which is consistent with the result of the study of Rahayunigsih et al. (2020).

To provide contribution to the interaction, the teachers should reasonably evaluate the potential face-threatening nature of the attempt they are going to make and then extrapolate either to shun it completely, or at least to alleviate it by taking an apt linguistic stratagem as these politeness strategies. It must be conspicuous that these utterances must be apt to the politic verbal behavior of the ongoing discourse activity. However, it should also be noted that utterances are not in themselves polite. They are used to suffice facework. That is, they guarantee that the universal need of not only students but also individual human beings to be respected and appreciated and their universal right to relative freedom of thought and action are greatly considered.

In terms of politeness maxims, the teachers used both tact and approbation maxim. More specifically, tact maxim is used to minimize expression of beliefs which implies cost to others and implies benefit to others (Leech, 1983; Cutting, 2002). On the other hand, the approbatim maxim is used to reduce the expression of beliefs which conveys dispraise of other and augments the expression of beliefs that conveys approval of other. (Leech, 1983; Cutting, 2002). This is often realized by making other people feel good by means of showing solidarity. The similarities between the two maxims are of no surprise as, one way or another, both emphasize Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive and negative politeness strategies. It can be realized that teacher used the said maxims to consider student's positive self-image to be accepted and appreciated and approved of by others and to not be imposed on by others. Moreover, it is also observed that modesty maxim and agreement maxim were used by the teachers. The use of modesty maxim is realized by means of giving a low significance to speaker's merits which is often expressed by means of expressive and even assertive (Leech, 1983; Cutting, 2022). The use of so particularly expressive or stating an apology is to save negative face or suffice the right of someone to personal preserves and non-distraction (Brown and Levinson, 1987). On the other hand, the agreement maxim is to give a high significance to the word of the other to increase agreement and decrease disagreement. (Leech, 1983; Cutting, 2002). This is supported by Brown and Levinson (1987) stating that this stresses emotional agreement which helps suffice the need for one's self-image to be accepted and for one be treated as a member of that group and/or community. Compared to other maxims used, the tact maxim was frequently used, which is consistent with the result of the study of Atmowardaoyo, Weda, and Nashruddin (2018) except that sympathy maxim was used by the participants in their study.

5. Conclusion

This study substantiates the importance of politeness in the teaching and learning process. As the results of the study entail, the linguistic use of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) helps facilitate students' academic performance, where they serve as strategic conflict avoidance or strategic construction of cooperative social interaction (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003, & Leech, 2005). More specifically, the use of politeness linguistic expressions (e.g. politeness markers, consultative devices, playdowns, etc.) is of help to show how teachers apply the value of the intercultural approach, where students are taught to carefully utilize their linguistic forms to signal politeness. It is also important to note that the way students are taught greatly affects how they would respond in the teaching and learning process. This entails that teachers should use several politeness strategies, particularly positive politeness, to show solidarity and friendliness. Furthermore, teachers should use several politeness maxims, particularly tact and approbation maxims, to minimize cost and maximize praise to students. Teachers should continue to utilize these linguistic politeness forms as they significantly contribute to students' academic performance and self-esteem (Hassan et al., 2017). In addition, the results of the study further imply that through the behaviors manifested by the teachers in the classroom, students are implicitly taught to engage with others in a rapport of equality, to take an interest in embracing different perspectives, and to achieve valuable skills of mediation.

By all odds, this study is of help in the dissemination of pragmatic approach to real-world practical problems of language use. It teaches teachers and students the value of understanding contexts in conversations and in language use. They become good listeners of language who can distinguish language hints veiled from those who have no knowledge on speech acts and pragmatic meaning. More specifically, this can be used as reference in dealing with politeness related problem which entails curriculum integration. This can be approached within sociology, conflict studies, history, and even literary studies, to name a few. Also, this study can serve as actual data for other

researchers, either to use as a model or to improve upon or disagree with and perhaps even more critical, to develop better tools and theories. Considering the huge array of latent intellectual, social, cultural, and environmental factors that this study comprises, this will be of great help for people to be engaged in self-regulation and become informed and responsible individuals. As Ye (2019) woud put it, being polite is a basic human decency, and it acknowledges our humanity.

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