

**THE POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY TEENAGERS
IN GIVING COMPLAINTS TO THEIR PEERS
BASED ON SOCIAL DISTANCE
(A Case at SMAN 9 Padang)**

THESIS

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
to Obtain Strata One (S1) Degree*



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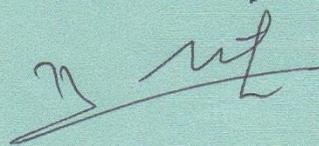
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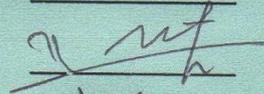
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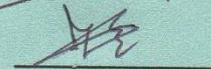
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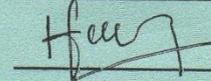
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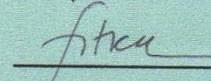
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Dengan ini menyatakan, bahwa Skripsi saya dengan judul *The Politeness Strategies Used by Teenagers in Giving Complaints to Their Peers Based on Social Distance (A Case at SMAN 9 PADANG)* adalah benar merupakan hasil karya saya dan bukan merupakan plagiat dari karya orang lain. Apabila suatu saat terbukti saya melakukan plagiat maka saya bersedia diproses dan menerima sanksi akademis maupun hukum sesuai dengan hukum dan ketentuan yang berlaku, baik di Institusi UNP maupun masyarakat dan Negara.

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ABSTRAK

Sandri Dillawiyansari, 2015: “The Politeness Strategies Used by Teenagers in Giving Complaints to Their Peers Based on Social Distance (A Case at SMAN 9 Padang)

Pembimbing : 1. Prof. Dr. Hermawati Syarif, M. Hum
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Komplain merupakan tindak tutur yang dapat mengancam *image* partisipan (pendengar) sehingga penutur perlu mempertimbangan strategi kesantunan untuk mengurangi ancaman *image* tersebut. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan strategi kesantunan yang digunakan remaja dalam memberikan komplain kepada teman sebaya mereka. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif, yaitu mendeskripsikan fenomena bahasa remaja berdasarkan data yang terkumpul, baik data berupa angka-angka maupun data dalam bentuk analisis dari bentuk dan gaya bahasa. Objek dari penelitian ini adalah remaja di SMAN 9 Padang. Teknik yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan data adalah dengan menyebarkan *DCT (Discourse Completion Task)* yang diisi dengan menuliskan komplain berdasarkan situasi-situasi yang disediakan. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, strategi kesantunan yang cenderung digunakan oleh remaja SMAN 9 Padang adalah *bald on record* dan *positive politeness*, baik kepada teman biasa maupun kepada teman dekat. Jumlah komplain yang menggunakan *bald on record* adalah 252 komplain untuk teman biasa dan 205 komplain untuk teman dekat. Selanjutnya, jumlah komplain yang menggunakan *positive politeness* adalah 128 komplain diberikan kepada teman biasa dan 178 komplain untuk teman dekat.

Kata Kunci: Strategi kesantunan, komplain, remaja, teman biasa, teman dekat

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Bismilillah. First of all I would like to express my gratitude to the God of universe, Allah SWT for His blessings and mercies, so I can accomplish my thesis entitled *The Politeness Strategies Used by Teenagers in Giving Complaints to Their Peers Based on Social Distance (A Case at SMAN 9 Padang)* as the requirement for the degree of Strata One (S1). Then, *Solawat* and *Salam* are always delivered to the last Islamic prophet, Muhammad SAW, who has guided his followers to the brighter life of knowledge.

I also would like to express my gratitude to my thesis advisors, Prof. Dr. Hermawati Syarif, M.Hum and Yuli Tiarina, M.Pd, who have thoroughly guided me in evaluating and helping to finish my thesis. Then, I would like to say thank you to all of the examiners: Prof. Dr. M. Jufrizal, M.Hum; Dr. Hamzah, MA, M.M; and Fitrawati, S,S. M.Pd for the knowledge, evaluation, and correction to finish this thesis.

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Padang, August 2015

Sandri Dillawiyansari

DEDICATION

This thesis is a gift to my beloved mother and father

(Eldayan and Yasmiati)

Their sincere kindness, loves, affections,

become my big motivation to achieve my best and bright future.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DA: Expressing Direct Annoyance

A : Accusing

B : Blaming

DR: Direct Asking for Responsibility

W : Warning

T : Threatening

RD: Requesting and Ordering Directly

AR: Asking Reason

SA: Seeking for Agreement

LH: Letting Off Hook

AC: Asking for Responsibility Conventionally

RC: Requesting and Ordering Conventionally

H : Hinting

BR: Bald on Record

PP: Positive Politeness

NP: Negative Politeness

OR: Off Record

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In daily life, people are often faced uncomfortable situation because of other people. This happens if someone does not agree with the behavior of another person since the person makes her/him displeasure. One way to express the displeasure is by giving complaint.

However, giving complaint can be a problem because the characteristic of complaint speech act can threaten people's face, so-called Face-Threatening Act (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The term face is defined as public self-image that needs to be maintained when it is threatened. According to Trosborg (1995), complaint has considered as impolite behavior. Most of the expressions of complaint tend to hurt, offend, and insult the hearer. Consequently, it can disrupt the relationship between a complainer and a complaine if the language used is not considered. Therefore, sometimes people tend to choose to be silent rather than communicate the complaint with the complaine.

Nonetheless, choosing silent generally will not solve the problem. If they choose to be silent, maybe the complaine still does the same things that make the complainer feels annoyed. As a result, the complainer feels uncomfortable to interact with the complaine again. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain the relationship by communicating the problems to make the participants feel comfortable to interact again. They can convey complaint by considering the language used to make the complaine understands.

The appropriate and proper language used can help the complainer to convey her/his displeasure without disrupting relationship with the complaine. It can be done by showing politeness. Politeness is defined as a way to minimize the potential of breakdown in relationship. Politeness has strategies, called bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Each strategy is chosen because of the influence of the context of interaction and communication, and complaine's face.

One of the factors influencing what politeness strategy should be used is the context of social distance. Social distance was measured based on familiarity between the teenagers as the complainers and their peers as the complainees. Related to this research, peers were teenagers' classmates or schoolmates, which were divided by two categories based on the social distance. The first category was casual friends, who were the people known by the teenagers, but they did not have close relationship so that they seldom communicated each other. The second category was close friends who were people known very well by the teenagers and they had very close relationship so that the communication often occurred in any time. It is in line with Huang (2008), casual friends are people you interact with only once in a while. Therefore, compared to close friends, casual friends have limited knowledge of the other person.

By considering the social distance a politeness strategy chosen can solve problem. The strategy is chosen because the complainer still wants to save the complaine's face in order to make the complaine understands and accepts the complaint. Consequently, the relationship keeps going well. Commonly, it is done

by using indirect language which can contain polite language to maintain complainees' face. Nevertheless, an inappropriate politeness strategy sometimes can create a problem. It is usually implemented by using direct language. The complainer tends to say the complaint without saving the complainees' face and ignoring the context of interaction and communication. Sometimes, the language contains rude choice of words. As a result the relationship may be disrupted.

However, in the real life, there is a paradox for some cases. Sometimes the relationship still keeps going well, although the complainer uses direct language in giving complaint and it sounds a threat for complainees' face. This case commonly occurs on teenagers' communication. Complaints given by teenagers to their peers can be found in the daily life, for example in schools, neighborhoods, public transportations, or in boarding houses. Related to this research the group of teenagers taken were students of senior high school. The followings are the example of complaints given by teenagers to their peers, either to casual friends or close friends.

- 1) Situation: In a school, a friend returned a book, but it was broken
Eeh... gimana lagi tu? Yaudahlah, dilem aja nantik.
 'Oh my God, how to fix it? Well, I'll glue it together later'
- 2) Situation: In a boarding house, when studying a friend turned on music loudly.
Din, tolong kecilkan musiknya dikit. Aku mau ujian besok.
 'Din, please turn down the music. I have an examination for tomorrow.'
- 3) Situation: A friend did not care about the group assignment.
X, tugas kita gimana ni? Ayoklah kita bikinnya bareng-bareng.
 'X, how about our assignment? Let's make it together.'

- 4) Situation: In a classroom, a friend invited to chat when a teacher was explaining the lesson.
Jan maota jo lai, kawan.
 ‘Shut up, guys.’
- 5) Situation : A friend forgot a promise
Baa kamu ni?
 ‘What is wrong with you?’

Based on the examples above, the complaints of (a), (b), and (c) were normally used by the complainer to their casual friends. The complaints were conveyed by implementing the politeness strategy indicating indirectness. Indirectness means the complainer did not convey obvious complaints. They chose to convey the complaints by trying to find ways to solve the problem, *yaudahlah, dilem aja nantik, ayoklah kita bikinnya bareng-bareng*, and by saying *please*. On the other hand, the examples (d), and (e) that indicate directness were commonly used by the complainer to their close friends. The complaints given use the politeness strategy indicating direct statement for an order/command for repair the condition, *jan maota jo lai, kawan*, and the question indicating the expression of annoyance, *baa kamu ni?*. Therefore, the directness here means the utterance of complaints that can be recognized obviously by the complaine. The phenomenon actually suit to a theory proposed by Thomas (1995), that says the close relationship between the complainer and the complaine makes the complainer tends to express complaint directly rather than to the complaine having distant relationship with her/him.

Yet, in a real life, sometimes it is found that the examples of (a), (b) and (c) were also used to close friends; while (d) and (e) were used to casual friends. This is the paradox explained before that sometimes teenagers choose direct

language to complain with their peers, whether the peers were casual friends or close friends. The complaints sometimes may contain rude choice of words and tends to threaten the complainees' face, but it does not disrupt the relationship. In other words, it is implemented for empowering the solidarity, which reflects reciprocity between them. Based on this fact, the research was done to fortify the validity of the phenomenon. The research tried to find out what politeness strategy tended to be used by teenagers in giving complaints to casual friend and close friend. In addition, it is also interesting to see how significant the factor of solidarity influences the language of senior high school teenagers in giving complaint to maintain the relationship with their peers.

Finally, it is necessary to do the research because in any time of communication, politeness strategies have played important roles in maintaining the relationship between speakers/complainers and hearers/complainees. Without considering the politeness strategies in giving complaint, the language used to convey the displeasure may not be appropriate and the communication will not be going well that it can disrupt the relationship between a complainer and a complainees. Although complaint is a kind of speech act that threatens the face of complainees, still it is good for the complainer to consider that the relationship should be kept well.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the research problem, complaint related to politeness strategies can be studied in several studies; they are pragmatics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and anthropological linguistics.

Pragmatically it is possible to do the research on how context of social distance (casual friends and close friend) influences teenagers' politeness strategies in giving complaints to their peers. Based on sociolinguistics, the research can be done by looking the relationship between politeness in giving complaints and the society of teenagers, then how it can lead to variation of language. However, if the research is done through investigating how human mind (in this case in teenager age) influences the language in giving complaint by using politeness strategies, it is then the research done in the field of psycholinguistics. The last one is it also can be studied from anthropological linguistics that see how the culture of teenager influences the teenagers' politeness strategies in giving complaint by looking at the politeness strategy chosen.

C. Limitation of Research Problem

According to identification of the research problem, it is possible to do the research based on all of the studies stated previous. However, in order to have focus and deep analysis, the researcher limited the research problem. This research took pragmatics to see the politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaints to their peers based on social distance.

D. Formulation of Research Problem

Based on identification and limitation of research problem, the main problem of this research is formulated: Based on social distance, what are the politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaint to their peers?

E. Research Questions

In order to do the research in operational ways, the main research problem then can be elaborated as the following research questions.

1. What are the politeness strategies used frequently by teenagers of senior high school students in giving complaints to their casual friends?
2. What are the politeness strategies used frequently by teenagers of senior high school students in giving complaints to their close friends?
3. Are politeness strategies used in giving complaints to casual friends and close friends different from each other?
4. Is solidarity one of the significant factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaint to their peers?

F. Purposes of the Research

The main purpose of this research is to find out politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaint based on social distance.

1. To find out politeness strategies used frequently by teenagers of senior high school students in giving complaints to casual friends.
2. To find out politeness strategies used frequently by teenagers of senior high school students in giving complaints to close friends.

3. To find out if politeness strategies used in giving complaints to casual friends and close friends are different from each other.
4. To find out if solidarity is one of the significant factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaint to their peers.

G. Significance of the Research

Through this study, it is theoretically expected to extend theories and study materials in pragmatics, especially the use of politeness strategies related to the context of social distance. In addition, the findings of the study generally are supposed to give practical contribution in pragmatic research. It is expected as a useful source for the readers, such lecturers, university students, or other researchers who are interested in this topic, to have an inspiration to advance the study of politeness strategies

H. Definition of Key Terms

The definitions of key terms are used to avoid misunderstanding of some conceptual terms that may appear later. The definitions of key terms which can help readers getting the ideal of conceptual terms are such as following.

Complaint : The utterance showing the complainer's displeasure to the complainee because the complainee has disappointed the complainer on a certain case.

Politeness strategy : A strategy of showing consciousness to another's person face by considering the context of communication.

- Teenagers : Young people between 14 years old until 19 years old, who are in senior high school.
- Peers : People who have the same age or level of adolescence, and the same level of social position.
- Social Distance : One of contexts showing the level of familiarity between participants, in this case it is shown by the difference familiarity between casual friends and close friends.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the conclusion regarding to politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaints to their peers based on social distance then can be drawn. Firstly, bald on record and positive politeness were frequently used by the teenagers in giving complaints their peers, either the casual friends or the close friends. Thus, there was no significant difference of politeness strategy used in giving complaints to the casual friends and the close friends. It is assumed that this occurred because the social distance between casual friend and close friend was not clear. Since both casual friend and close friend were people that had been known by the teenagers and there was small and slight scale of the distance in both relationships. Moreover, the DCT which represents lack of natural data seems the reason why findings found no difference of politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaints to both casual friends and close friends.

Although, bald on record showed direct displeasure to the peers, it did not really disrupt the relationship since they could get along easily. They would like to be open in communication to show solidarity to keep maintain the friend relationship. Then, some of them expressed the complaints by using positive politeness. It was implemented through friendly language that tried seeking for agreement and asking for reason, or some teenagers even forgave them. Based on the theory, the main purposes of using positive politeness is to show solidarity.

Therefore, it can be concluded that solidarity seems one of the significant factors influencing the teenagers' politeness strategies in giving complaint to their peers, either to casual friends or close friends.

B. Suggestions

The researcher only identified and investigated the politeness strategies used by teenagers in giving complaints to their peers either to casual friends or close friends. However, there are still many studies which can be done related to this topic. Therefore, here the researcher suggests other researchers that might be interested in this topic to study it from the other point of views. It can be extended by choosing others respondents, such as adults or children. In addition, while this research only focuses on social distance, new researchers can develop and use the other contexts, for examples social status, gender, and so on.

In addition, related to the findings of this research that did not find any difference between the use of politeness strategies used to complain casual friends and close friends, the researcher recommends taking clearer continuum scale of social distance, for example close friends and strangers. Then, for further researches, it is suggested to set more situations in DCT, or to use other instruments, such as oral DCT, multiple choice of DCT, role play, or observation.

Moreover, based on the research, the bald on record, which is the maximum FTA, were frequently used by the teenagers. They thought this strategy could maintain their relationship because it was a way to show solidarity. However, some of them expressed this strategy rudely, for example by calling the peers with *nyet* and *kampret*. Therefore, here the researcher suggests that

teenagers should consider more about the choice of word in showing the politeness. The positive politeness might be the best strategy to give complaint to the peers because the complaints sound friendlier. In addition, it can be supported by the helps from parents and teachers. Parents and teachers should consider the polite language when they complain the teenagers. It can help the teenagers to learn more how to give complaint politely. In education institution, it is also necessary to teach them about polite language used in the daily life.

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