IREELL
Indonesian Review of English Education, Linguistics, and Literature
P-ISSN: 3025-2369 **I** E-ISSN: 3021-8101
https://jurnalfaktarbiyah.iainkediri.ac.id/index.php/ireel/index

An Analysis of Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students in English Class at SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri

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ABSTRACT

Politeness is a vital component in communication as it assists in preventing misunderstandings, reducing conflict, and building harmony between interlocutors, such as communication between the educator and learners in the educational setting. This descriptive qualitative study attempts to explore the types and preferred politeness techniques employed by both educators and learners in an English class. An English teacher and 40 students of class 7 G SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri were the participants of this research. The research's primary instrument was an observation by video recording and documentation, which was afterward examined by the researchers through data reduction, display of data, conclusion drawing, and triangular validation. The data was evaluated employing Leech's politeness theory, involving the following maxims: tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. The findings revealed that the instructor employed all six maxims, namely tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy maxim. While the students only employed four maxims, they displayed tact, modesty, agreement, and sympathy maxim. There are 132 utterances between the instructor and students, and it was discovered that the agreement maxim was the most frequently employed politeness approach by the teacher and students, with 41 frequencies used by the teacher and 37 frequencies used by the students.

Keywords: Analysis, Politeness Strategies, English Class

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Introduction

Politeness is one of the important aspects when interacting with others. In general, politeness is concerned with a relationship between two people, whom we may refer to as self and other (G. N. Leech, 1983). According to Sifianou (Watts, 2003), politeness is a social principle that considers satisfaction between the speaker and hearer when interacting. Politeness becomes one of the speaker's efforts to keep the hearer feeling so as not to be offended or uncomfortable with the speaker's speech or actions. In other words, politeness is an act that speakers take to respect the interlocutor. Politeness could be seen not only in the substance of dialogue but also in how its participants control and shape it (G. N. Leech, 1983). Therefore, both speakers and hearers should pay attention to what will be talked about, when it is time to talk, who is talking and how it should speak to maintain good relationships with others in interaction.

Considering the relationship between politeness and the interaction between speakers and hearers, learning activities are one of the interactions that allow the use of politeness strategies in the interaction between speakers and listeners. In learning activities, there is a teacher and students in the same classroom, and there is a process of communication. The occurrence of politeness can be found in both the implicit and explicit forms of communication. Both speaker and hearer may not be aware that they are employing the concept of politeness in their speech acts at the time of the event.

Leech (1983) proposed six politeness strategies which are well-known as the politeness principle with conversational maxims. Maxims are the rules that appear in the conversation and determine whether the speaker can be cooperative or not while doing a conversation (Hamani & Puluhulawa, 2019). The first maxim is the tact maxim, the second maxim is the generosity maxim, the third maxim is the approbation maxim, the fourth maxim is the modesty maxim, the fifth maxim is the agreement maxim, and the last maxim is the sympathy maxim.

As a result of the globalization era, students' attitudes and morals are changing constantly. Most of them are unpleasant and unfriendly to elders, speak impolitely, and prefer to communicate in slang or informal language regularly. This circumstance indicates that

politeness in Indonesian education is declining. Dealing with this issue necessitates collaboration between parents and the school system. But, realize it or not, at this time most parents prefer to assign the problem associated with students' attitudes to the school. Indirectly, the teacher as one of the school organizations has a crucial role to build students' morals and values. Raharjo in (Rostikawati, Aeni, &Wuryani, 2020) states that the positive character of the nation is a result of a solid education. Therefore, if society's character is good and responsible, civilizations may be properly established. It is possible to envision if the teacher does not implement the function correctly. This nation and country will be left behind in the increasingly relentless growth of science and technology. As the beneficiary of the trust, the teacher is ethically obligated to educate their students so that they acquire biological-psychological-spiritual maturity, allowing the teacher to work properly and responsibly (Rostikawati, Aeni, &Wuryani, 2020).

Based on the statement, this current study is interested in conducting research at SMPN 1 Mojo. This school is one of the primary schools which is located in Kediri. The reason to choose the topic and the school is based on the observation or pre-research that did by the researchers. The researchers found a variety of natural acts related to politeness strategies used by students and teacher in the English learning-teaching process. Then, when the researchers were conducting classroom observations, the researchers found a strategy of politeness carried out by teacher when communicating with the students. The students' polite habits can be seen from the way they greet everyone they meet, especially those who are elder than them, or when they talk to their teacher.

The researchers found that there were some students still cannot control their language when communicating with their teacher. It may be influenced by their age or their habit to communicate with other people. Sometimes, the students use impolite language when doing conversations with their teacher in the classroom. This habitually should be changed to build students' attitudes toward politeness. Besides, sometimes the teacher also says uncomfortable words to their students when doing the learning-teaching process. This act possibly offends students' feelings and makes them not interested in joining the class. So, politeness has an important role in the school environment, because it can create a

comfortable atmosphere and avoids offense between teacher and students in the classroom.

Because of this problem, the researchers are interested in studying politeness strategies used by teacher and students in the learning-teaching process. Besides, some previous studies have supported the reason why this study needs to be done. First, there is a thesis written by (Muhasibi, 2021) entitled "Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students on Online English Teaching Learning Process at SMPN 2 Tanon, Sragen in Academic Year 2020/2021". The objective of this study is to investigate the types of politeness strategies and the most dominant politeness strategies used by teacher and students in the online English teaching-learning process by using Brown and Levinson's theory. Second, there is a journal article written by (Annisah, Waliyudin, Ramli, &Nurbaya, 2021) entitled "Politeness Maxims Used by English Students Program Study at STKIP Taman SiswaBima". The purpose of this study is to look at the types and functions of the most common types of politeness maxims employed in classroom interaction by English Program Study students at STKIP Taman SiswaBima by using the concept of maxims proposed by Leech. Therefore, the researchers conducted the study entitled "An Analysis of Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students in English Class at SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri".

Methods

This study was conducted in a descriptive qualitative research method. The researchers chose the descriptive qualitative design in this study because it provides the result of the data analysis in the form of words. In this study, the researchers described the teacher and students' utterances consisting of politeness strategies proposed by Leech. Additionally, the researchers also used video recording by using a smartphone and observation as tools for collecting the data. The subject of this research was an English teacher of SMPN 1 Mojo and the students of class 7 G which is consisting of 40 students in a class. The researchers chose this class because the students in this class were more active than other classes in the same grade and also based on the suggestion of the teacher who has known the character of the

students. Then, the researchers chose Mrs. X as a subject of this research because she was an active teacher in the teaching-learning process.

The data of this research were collected by using observation and video recording. First, the researchers did observation to the school to decide which class was appropriate to be the object of this research or doing pre-research. The researchers did classroom observation and also asked the teacher for a suggestion to choose the class.

The data source for the research was the process of teaching and learning English for two meetings involving an English teacher and students of class 7 G from SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri. Thus, the data source of this study was from the same teacher and the same class and there were two video recordings.

In analyzing the data, the researchers transcribed the data from video recording and then identified and classified the data based on the kind of politeness strategies. Apart from the transcription, the researchers also took notes on the description of the context of the application of politeness strategies in the class.

In this study, the researchers used a table to display the data consisting of types of maxims, the use of maxims, and the frequency of the maxim. Following the collection and classification of the necessary data, the researchers analyzed the data following Leech's (1983) theory. After the data has been interpreted, the results are displayed in the table and chart format to help researchers get a better understanding of the results and to determine the kind of politeness strategies that were commonly used by a teacher and students.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this research were based on the data of video transcription in teaching-learning activity conducted in SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri. The research object is an English teacher of SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri and the students of class 7 G at SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri. Before recording the teaching-learning activity, the researchers tried to find an appropriate class to be the object of the research through classroom observation. Hence, the researchers came

to the school and met the teacher to ask for some suggestions related to the research needs.

The video recording was taken twice in class 7 G at SMPN 1 Mojo. The duration of each meeting of the lesson is 40 X 2 minutes in normal conditions. After taking the video, the researchers transcribed the data to make it easier in analyzing the data. Below is the result of the kind of politeness maxims found and the most frequent politeness maxims used by a teacher and the students in the teaching-learning process in class 7 G at SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri according to Leech's politeness principles :

The Kind of Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students in English Class

Based on the data analysis, the researchers found that there were six maxims used by the teacher consisting of tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. While the politeness maxim used by the students was just four kinds of politeness maxims consist of tact maxim, agreement maxim, modesty maxim, and sympathy maxim. The total of the data findings can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. The Findings of Politeness Maxims

Types of Maxim	Frequency (Used by Teacher)	Frequency (Used by Students)
Tact Maxim	12	1
Generosity Maxim	2	-
Approbation Maxim	32	-
Modesty Maxim	2	1
Agreement Maxim	41	37
Sympathy Maxim	3	1
Total	**92**	**40**

The Types of Politeness Strategies Used by the Teacher

1. Tact Maxim

Tact maxim has a function to maximize the benefit to others and minimize the cost to others (Leech, 1983). The tact maxim is used in impositive and commissive speech acts such

as ordering, requesting, and recommending. Based on the data findings, it was found that the tact maxim was used 13 times by the teacher. Below is the analysis of the findings.

a. Teacher (T): OK. Good. *Sit down, please!* Give applause, please!

This utterance shows that the teacher gives a commanding to her students to sit back on their chairs. Here, the teacher adds the word 'please' that makes the command more polite. This command said by the teacher with a soft voice and smiling expression that made the command soften and does not show the imposition.

Thus, the utterance indicates a tact maxim because the teacher maximizes students' benefit by asking for them to sit back after singing a song directly before the students asked when they could sit down and the teacher talk to them with a low tone.

b. T :*Kemarinnggakmasukkenapa, Le*?

Student (S): Sakit, Bu.

This utterance occurs when the teacher asks for the reason why the student was absent from the last meeting. The teacher adds the term *'le'* which in Javanese is a call for boys and the use of this pronoun can make the speech sound soften. Teacher said this utterance with a gentle intonation and she did not show the expression of coercion against student to answer the question so that the student does not feel pressured.

Besides that, she also shows the expression that she believes her student's answer. This sentence indicates that the teacher's utterance does not make the students stressed and feel comfortable. Thus, this utterance includes the tact maxim because the teacher maximizes the students' benefit as a hearer without feeling intervened and this utterance deals with negative politeness that is minimizing imposition.

2. Sympathy Maxim

The sympathy maxim is to show antipathy between self and others and to show sympathy between self and others as maximal as possible (Leech, 1983). The sympathy maxim was used 3 times by the teacher. Below is the analysis of sympathy maxim.

c. T: *How are you today?*

S: I am fine. And you?

In this utterance, the teacher asks for the students' condition after opening the class. The teacher's utterance represents that she cares for her students by saying 'How are you today?' to them. She said this utterance excitedly and show her smile to the students. It means she tries to reduce antipathy toward her students and show her sympathy. Thus, it is categorized as a sympathy maxim.

d. T: *Kita nyanyidulubareng-bareng, pakaigerakanya, biar fresh. Pagi-pagimasihbanyak yang ngantukini.* OK, are you ready?

This part of the dialogue shows that the teacher said 'Kita nyanyidulubareng-bareng, pakaigerakanya, biar fresh. Pagi-pagimasihbanyak yang ngantukini.' This utterance has meaning that the teacher asks for the students to sing a song and dance together to refresh their brains and their bodies because they look likes sleepy. It shows that the teacher gives full attention to the students' condition in a classroom so that they can continue the class well. In this case, the teacher tries to maximize her sympathy and minimize antipathy as maximal as possible. Thus, this utterance is classified as a sympathy maxim.

e. T: Ya Allah, ayoberdiridulu. Ayo grup 9! *Ayo, diberisemangat. Tepuktangan!*

In this part of the dialogue, the teacher said 'Ayo, diberisemangat. Tepuktangan!' She said this utterance loudly because seeing that the students of group nine still cannot perform in front of the class because they have not memorized the dialogue. Eventually, she asks the other students to give applause for supporting the group. This action indicates that the teacher shows sympathy and avoids antipathy. Thus, this utterance is classified as a sympathy maxim.

Types of Politeness Strategies Used by Students

1. Tact Maxim

In the tact maxim, it was found that it was used by the students 1 time. Below is the analysis of the tact maxim that used by the the students.

f. S: *Mohon maaf bu, saya ingin bertanya.* Untuk kelompoknya sama kayak kemarin atau beda?

The utterance above was said by a student to the teacher about the group division mechanism. The student opens her question by saying 'Mohon maaf bu, saya ingin bertanya.' To say apologize before talking to other people is more polite because it means the speaker shows their respect to the hearer. In this context, a student who has lower social status than her teacher tries to show her respect to the teacher. This is also to make the teacher not bothered to the student's questions and this minimizes cost to the teacher. Thus, this utterance is classified as a tact maxim.

2. Modesty Maxim

The modesty maxim was used by the students 1 time. Below is the analysis of the modesty maxim that was found.

g. S1: Ayo, latihan*disik*. (Let's practice first!)
   S2: Iyo, *aku you gung apaliki*. (OK, I also haven't been ready yet.)

This dialogue happens between a student and another student in the classroom. The first student invites the second student to practice first before performing in front of the class. Then the second student answered, *'Iyo, aku you gung apaliki*.' The second student's utterance indicates that she tries to reduce praise to herself by saying that she has not been ready yet for her friend even though she has been ready actually. Thus, this utterance is classified as a modesty maxim because the speaker minimizes praise to self and maximizes dispraise to self.

3. Agreement Maxim

In the agreement maxim it was found that it was used 37 times by the students. However, there are 3 types of agreements that were used more than one time. First, the word yes that was used 20 times, the word *sudah* was used 3 times, and *siap* was used 2 times. Below are the examples of the analysis of agreement maxim.

h. T: Kita nyanyidulubareng-bareng, pakaigerakanya, biar fresh. Pagi-pagimasihbanyak yang ngantukini. OK, are you ready?
   SS: *Yes, I am ready*.

In the dialogue above, the teacher asks the students to warm up before beginning the lesson. When she asks the students' readiness all of them said 'Yes, I am ready.' The students show the expression of happiness and full of passion when saying the utterance. The students' response represents that they give full agreement to their teacher so this is classified as an agreement maxim.

i. T : Ayo, sekarang coba dengarkan, jawab bu Eni. Yang salah dijewer telinga temannya ayo, ya! Pegang telinga temannya! Mulai dari awal dan bukunya ditutup! Close your book!
SS: *Baik bu.*

The dialogue above shows that the teacher requests the students to listen to their friends and gives punishment to those who do not follow the rules. The teacher utterance threatens the students' face because it will be there a punishment if they make a mistake. Then, the students respond '*baikbu*' which means they agree to the rules. They said their agreement without any complains and in a loud voice. Thus, the students maximize agreement to the teacher and this is classified as an agreement maxim.

j. T : Nah, what do you think about the material for today?
SS: *Ungkapan meminta maaf dan terimakasih.*

In the dialogue above, the teacher asks the students to give their opinion about the material for that meeting. The material at that time was about apologizing and thanking expressions. Then, the students give respond by saying 'Ungkapan meminta maaf dan terimakasih.' The students mention the material correctly and appropriately to the material at that times. It seems there is full agreement between the students and the teacher. Thus, the students' utterance is classified as an agreement maxim.

k. T : Kalau kalian belum siap, satu kelompok saya suruh berdiri dulu. Grup 2 siap?
SS : *Siap bu.*

In the dialogue above, the teacher asks the students from a certain group to show their performance but they have not been ready yet. Finally, the teacher threw his turn to group 2 and asked if they were ready. It turned out that group 2 was ready and responded to the teacher by saying 'siap bu' and they show expression without enforcement from the teacher.

The students' responses represent their matching with the teacher's wishes. Thus, the students are maximizing agreement with the teacher and this is classified as an agreement maxim.

4. Sympathy Maxim

The sympathy maxim was used 1 time by the students. Below is the analysis of the sympathy maxim.

I. T : How are you today?

SS : I am fine. *And you?*

In the dialogue above, the teacher asks about the students' condition which represents her sympathy for the students. Then, the students give respond by saying 'I am fine. And you?' that means the students re-enquiring about the teacher's condition. This utterance represents that the students are maximizing sympathy for others and minimizing antipathy to others. Thus, this is classified as a sympathy maxim.

The Most Frequent Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students in English Class

The second finding of this research is the dominant politeness strategies used by teacher and students in English Class. The researchers found the frequent politeness strategies that are used by the teacher and the students after analyzing the data found according to politeness strategies proposed by Leech. The result is provided in the following chart.

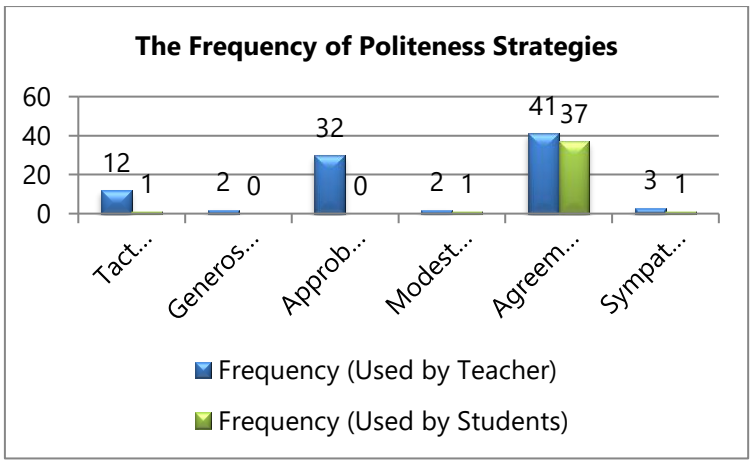


Chart 1. Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students

Based on the chart above, the politeness strategies or politeness maxims used by teacher consisting of tact maxim 12 times, generosity maxim 2 times, approbation maxim 32 times, modesty maxim 2 times, agreement maxim 41 times, and sympathy maxim 3 times. While the politeness maxim used by the students consists of tact maxim 1 time, modesty maxim 1 time, agreement maxim 37 times, and sympathy maxim 1 time. From the results can be seen that the most frequent politeness strategy used by teacher and students in English class was the agreement maxim with a frequency of 41 times used by teachers and 37 times used by the students. Thus, the frequency of agreement maxims was higher than other politeness strategies.

Yule (1996), states that pragmatic theory is the study of the meaning of the speaker's speech and the listener's interpretation. Interpretation of the meaning in pragmatics based on a particular context and how that context affects what is said. Based on the definition, it can be concluded that pragmatics is a discipline that discusses the contextual meaning of language use. Therefore, when the utterances are interpreted based on the context such as the setting, speakers, background knowledge, and others it can be named pragmatics. The researchers discussed this study based on the data findings above and found that the teacher used all of the types of politeness strategies proposed by Leech those were tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. While the students just used four types of politeness strategies consist of tact maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. The, most frequent politeness strategies used by the teacher and the students were the same that were agreement maxim.

Both the teacher and students applied politeness strategies in their interaction to avoid offending the interlocutor. The use of politeness strategies made the teacher more comfortable giving the lesson to the students and the students were comfortable joining the class. It also shows that a teacher should set a good manner to the students and the students should show their respect for teachers who have a higher social status than them. Therefore, politeness in speaking is one of the crucial things.

Based on the data findings, the teacher commonly used several questions, statements, or opinions that needed agreement from the students while the students commonly give an agreement response to the teacher and do not give any complaints. Thus, the agreement maxim was the kind of politeness strategy that was frequently used by the teacher and students in English class. In addition, the teacher frequently said "good" and gives applause to express her praise to the students. Then, the teacher also represents her identity as a Javanese ethnic by saying le to call her students. The term le which is close to Javanese culture indicates that the teacher's utterance sound softens and avoids intervention. So, it can build good communication between the teacher and the students.

The reason above is in line with Leech's statement that politeness is a conflict avoidance strategy that can be measured by how much effort is made to avoid conflict in a situation and to establish and maintain harmony between the speaker and the hearer (Leech, 1983). The use of the politeness maxims or politeness strategies can be seen in the expression of thanking, congratulating, apologizing, praising, and there were many other expressions.

There are two previous studies related to politeness strategies which are the same topic as this study. The first previous study is Muhasibi's research (2021) entitled "Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students on Online English Teaching Learning Process at SMPN 2 Tanon, Sragen in Academic Year 2020/2021". There are some differences between this previous study and this study. The first difference is finding. The previous research found four types of politeness strategies used by the teacher and three types of politeness strategies used by students in the learning-teaching process according to Brown and Levinson's politeness theories. Then, the most dominant politeness strategy used by the teacher is bald on-record while the students used positive politeness strategies. While this study found six types of politeness strategies used by teacher consisting of tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim while the students used four types of politeness strategies consisting of tact maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. The second difference is the theory to analyze the data. The previous research employed the theory of politeness strategies from Brown and Levinson, namely positive politeness, negative politeness, bald

on record, and off record. While this study employed the theory of politeness strategies from Geoffrey Leech, namely tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. Besides that, this study also has similarities to the previous study that is applying descriptive qualitative as the design of the research because analyzed the data descriptively, uses video recording to collect the data, examines politeness strategies, and has the same research subjects, namely an English teacher and the students of junior high school.

The third previous study is a journal article written by (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020) entitled "Teacher and Students' Politeness Strategies in EFL Classroom Interactions". This study is to know the use of politeness strategies by senior high school teacher and students in EFL Classroom interaction. This study was conducted in a descriptive qualitative research design by using documentation (video recording) to collect the data. Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies were applied by the researcher to analyze the data. This study shows the result that teacher and students in EFL classroom use three types of politeness strategies namely positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald-on record strategy.

Another previous study was an article journal written by (Annisah et al., 2021) entitled "Politeness Maxims Used by English Students Program Study at STKIP Taman SiswaBima". There are differences between this previous research and this study. The first difference is the findings. This previous research found six types of maxims used by the students and the dominant maxim was the tact maxim, while the findings of this study were six types of politeness strategies or maxims used by teacher and four types of maxims used by students. Then, the dominant politeness strategy used by teacher and students in this study was agreement maxim. Second, is the subject of the research. The subject of this study was an English teacher and the students of a certain class of junior high school while the previous study was only the students of the English department. Besides, there are several similarities of this previous research and this study. The first similarity is the theory that was used to analyze the data which was Leech's politeness principles. The design of the research which was applied descriptive qualitative research design. Then, the instrument to collect the data

was video recording. The last similarity is the previous study and this study investigated the same problem which was the types of politeness and the dominant politeness strategies.

Furthermore, this study on politeness strategy has a pedagogical contribution to the teaching-learning process. The first contribution was to the linguistic scope that applied to the student's lesson. The curriculum that is applied in the school today includes the material related to the several expressions in daily conversation. Indirectly, linguistics is an important area in the aspect of learning which includes politeness speech acts. Besides, the use of politeness strategies in the teaching-learning process will create harmony between the teacher and the students.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it is found there are six politeness strategies used by teacher consisting of 12 kinds of the tact maxim, 2 kinds of the generosity maxim, 32 kinds of approbation maxim, 2 kinds of modesty maxim, 41 kinds of agreement maxim, and 3 kinds of sympathy maxim. While the politeness strategies used by the students are four politeness strategies consisting of 1 kind of the tact maxim, 1 kind of modesty maxim, 37 kinds of the agreement maxim, and 3 kinds of sympathy maxim. Thus, the total data found was 132 politeness strategies analyzed by Leech's politeness principles. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that the most frequent politeness strategies used by the teacher and students were the agreement maxim because it has the highest frequency than the other strategies with the total data 41 times used by the teacher and 37 times used by the students.

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