

**POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY JACK MA  
IN WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM; ‘MEET THE LEADER’  
SESSION**

**THESIS**

**Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Bachelor Degree of  
English Department Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya**



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Declares that the thesis under the title *Positive Politeness Strategies Used by Jack Ma In World Economic Forum; 'Meet The Leader' Session* is my original scientific work which has been conducted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor Degree and submitted to the English Department, Arts and Humanities Faculty of Sunan Ampel State Islamic University. Additionally, it does not incorporate any other text from the previous experts except the quotations and theories itself. If the thesis later is found as a plagiarism work, the writer is truthfully responsible with any kind of suitable rules and consequences.

Surabaya, March 8<sup>th</sup> 2019

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Politeness is one of the important aspects of communication. Brown and Levinson (1987:17) stated that politeness is a way of behaving well by taking into account the feelings of people being addressed. Holmes (2001:267) argued that politeness is the people's ways to use the language appropriately towards their addressee. It means that being polite is not only saying 'thank you' or 'please' in the right place but also how people can use those word or the language appropriately.

Politeness strategies are used by people to establish a good relationship and harmonious interpersonal relationship with others. Besides, people are being polite in order to reduce the risk that might be happened during communication and it also used to get the conversation run well and go smoothly because the language can indicate the behavior or the attitude of someone.

Politeness strategies are also used in general discussion forums. In general discussion forums, people who have different social backgrounds must be presented. So that politeness strategy is needed to reduce and prevent the conflicts. World Economic Forum is an example of a discussion forum in the world which is attended by people from various regions and certainly, also have different social backgrounds. This event also presents speakers as fillers of the event, especially in 'Meet the Leader' session. Obviously, the speaker needs strategies to maintain the hearer's face and to attract attention from the audience in order to make the audience feel comfortable when they are joining the discussion. This was also the evident from Jack Ma who was one of the speakers at the 'World Economic Forum' event in 'Meet the Leader' session.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a non-profit organization foundation founded in Geneva and famous for its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland which always brings together leaders of world business, political leaders around the world, selected scholars and journalists to discuss important issues faced the world including health and the environment. The forum also holds an "Annual Meeting of the New Champions" in China and several regional meeting sessions each year.

At that time Jack Ma was a speaker at the 'Meet the Leader' session. Meet the Leader Session is an informal discussion for participants to hear about the personal experiences of prominent world leaders. At that moment, Jack Ma shared his personal experiences and gave opinions for the questions which are given by the moderator and also the audience who came from several regions and of course had different backgrounds knowledge. So, to make the discussion run smoothly and the listeners also satisfied with the answers, Jack Ma uses politeness strategies in his speech. This reason makes the study of politeness strategies is really interesting to be analyzed and it has been attracted researcher to conduct research on this particular topic.

The researcher interested to conduct the research at Meet the Leader Session of World Economic Forum because the researcher wanted to know what strategies were used by the invited speakers at this event to make their listeners interested and comfortable during the discussion, how are the speaker's way to apply politeness strategies and also how are the speaker's way to attract attention from the audience. Whereas, as explained above, this event was attended by the

various group of people who comes from a different region and have a different profession such as the leaders of world business, political leaders around the world, selected scholars and journalists.

In addition, the researcher chose 'Jack Ma' as an object of analysis because Jack Ma is included in the list of influential people in the world. As cited in Forbes.com, Jack Ma was born in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China, September 10, 1964. His age is 54 years old. He is a Chinese businessman. He is the founder and Executive Chairman of the Alibaba Group, the largest e-commerce company in China. He is the first Mainland Chinese citizen to have appeared in Forbes magazine and is listed as a world billionaire. In 2018, he was on the list of the most influential people in the world at number 21. This was evident in several events that invited Jack Ma as a speaker on events such as the University of Turkey, University of Vietnam and so forth.

Many Studies on politeness strategies have been done previously. The previous studies might be useful to support this research. The first is conducted by Khoiriyah (2016) entitled *Face Strategies Used by The Host in Interviewing Politician and Non-Politician Shown in Talk Show Rachel Maddow Show*. She has conducted this study using the descriptive qualitative method to analyzes face strategies using the theory of Brown and Levinson. She analyzes the utterances of the moderator in interviewing the guests that are politician and non-politician in Rachel Maddow Show which is held at February, 18<sup>th</sup> 2016. In her analysis, she found that the moderator is dominant using negative politeness when interviewing the guests from politician background with ways are conventionally indirect,

using hedges, avoiding coerce the guest and avoiding impinge. While in interviewing the guests from non-politician background positive politeness strategies are dominantly used by the moderator with ways conveying the same wants, claiming common ground, conveying the moderator and guest are cooperators, and fulfilling the guest's desire. This previous study has examined the kinds of politeness strategies and the factors that influence the choice of politeness strategies but this study did not explain the ways that are used by the speaker in applying the politeness strategies.

Second, the study of politeness strategies had been examined by Fatimatuzzahra (2017) entitled *Politeness Strategies of Representative Act in Discussion Forum Indonesia Lawyer Club (ILC)*. She analyzes the kinds of politeness strategies which accompanied of the representative act in discussion forum Indonesia Lawyer Club (ILC) by using Brown and Levinson's theory as the main theory and she uses the theory of Searle as supported theory for analyzing speech act. This research used Indonesia language as the data because the data is taken from Indonesia Lawyer Club which one of the discussion forum events in Indonesia. In her analysis, the researcher found that almost the participant using politeness strategies in doing a representative act. The researcher found three kinds of politeness strategies were accompanying representative act and positive politeness strategies were most conducted. She found the reasons that the speaker employed politeness strategies is to predict the future act and hearer condition to accept their utterances. This previous research has examined the kinds of politeness strategies that was accompanying representative act but the previous

researcher did not add the factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies and the ways that are used by the speaker in applying the politeness strategies.

Third, the study of politeness strategies had been done by Maharani (2018) entitled *A Study of Politeness Strategies Used by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump On The Second Presidential Debate*. She examines the types of politeness strategies that are used by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump on Second Presidential Debate and she also examines the factors that influence the choice of politeness strategies used by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump on Second Presidential Debate. This previous study analyzes the politeness strategies and the factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies used by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump on Second Presidential Debate using Brown and Levinson's theory. This previous study found 71 data that indicated in politeness strategies that are used by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump on Second Presidential Debate but the most strategies that often used by Hillary and Donald Trump are Positive Politeness and Bald on Record. In addition, she also found the factors that influence Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in choosing the politeness strategies are social distance and rank imposition. However, this previous study is still less complete because the researcher did not attach the ways of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump to apply the strategies in their speech.

After analyzing all that previous research presented above. The present researcher concludes that there is still some incompleteness in their research such as the topics covered which are too broad and did not focus on one of the kinds of politeness strategy. Most of the researcher examines all of the politeness strategies



such as Khoiriyah, Fatimatuzzahra, and Maharani. All of the researchers analyze all the type of politeness strategies. Consequently, making the previous studies have less explanation in the discussion section about the application of each strategy in politeness strategies. Besides, all those previous studies presented above did not explain the ways that are used by the speaker in applying politeness strategies in the conversation.

Hence, in order to fill the gaps. In this present study, the researcher conducted the study of politeness strategies in a particular topic that focusses in positive politeness strategies. This present study also examined a new object that never studied previously by the other research that is the study of politeness strategies used in world forum discussion by using the English language in conversation. That event attended by people who have a different profession and the audience come from any region of the entire world who have a different cultural background. As the researcher has already known, the different cultural background may have resulted in the different strategy of politeness strategy so Jack Ma as the speaker or the guest of that event used positive politeness strategies to satisfy the moderator and the audience and to minimize the conflict that might be happened. Since the data used in this research is English language and it made this research differ from other research that had been done previously. Furthermore, the researcher chose the World Economic Forum as a source to collect the data because it is one of the examples of a world-class discussion forum that invites representatives from several regions in the world. Automatically the language used in this event is English. Besides that, the









## 2.2 Context

Context holds an important role in communication because it correlates with the physical or social aspect of utterances (Leech, 1983: 13). Based on his perception, background knowledge which is shared by the speaker and the hearer in understanding the utterance is called context. It can help the speaker and the hearer to convey the messages and also to understand the meaning of the utterances.

From the definition above, it illustrated that context is one of the most important aspects of the process of understanding the meaning of each utterance. In every utterance, humans will find it difficult to interpret a speech if they do not know the context clearly.

## 2.3 Politeness Strategy

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987:61) and Goffman (1967:215), politeness is giving attention to people's faces. Mills (2003:6) also states that politeness is an expression to minimize face threatening acts toward another. From the statement above means that politeness is an action to give attention to others by minimizing actions that can threaten the hearer's face. Another definition of politeness is argued by Cruse (2006:131), politeness can be measured based on the feelings of satisfaction of the listeners. This can be achieved by minimizing the negative face and maximizing the positive face of the listeners.

Every single people have desires or face needs to save the face. So, maintaining the other's face and satisfying each other is common to cooperate with each other. There are two kinds of face among their positive face and

negative face. Negative face is a face that wants to be free from the actions that may threaten the face or something that deviates from hearer's wants. While the positive face is an act of saving the faces by showing the face that wants to be appreciated and approved by others.

Brown and Levinson (1978: 65-67) state that there are two kinds of acts that can threaten a positive face and negative face. It can be called as Face Threatening Acts (FTA). The acts that can threaten negative faces such as request, command, reminding, advice, suggestion, and warning. Then, the acts that might threaten positive faces such as showing disagreement, critics, contradiction or bringing bad news for the hearer. In addition, there are some acts that might threaten positive face and negative faces such as complaint, interruption, threat and strong expression of emotion.

Brown and Levinson (1987) divided politeness strategies into five categories that might be chosen by the speaker in performing face-threatening acts (FTAs) among them bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and no FTA that the risk of face loss grows the further down.

#### **2.4 Positive Politeness**

Brown and Levinson (1987: 101-129) argued that positive politeness is an act to satisfy the hearer's positive face. It can be useful to help the speaker to show his appreciation, approval, interest, and solidarity with the hearer. It can be shown by showing claiming common ground, conveying that the speaker and the hearer are cooperators and fulfill hearer's desires. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987) divided the positive politeness into the following paragraphs:

























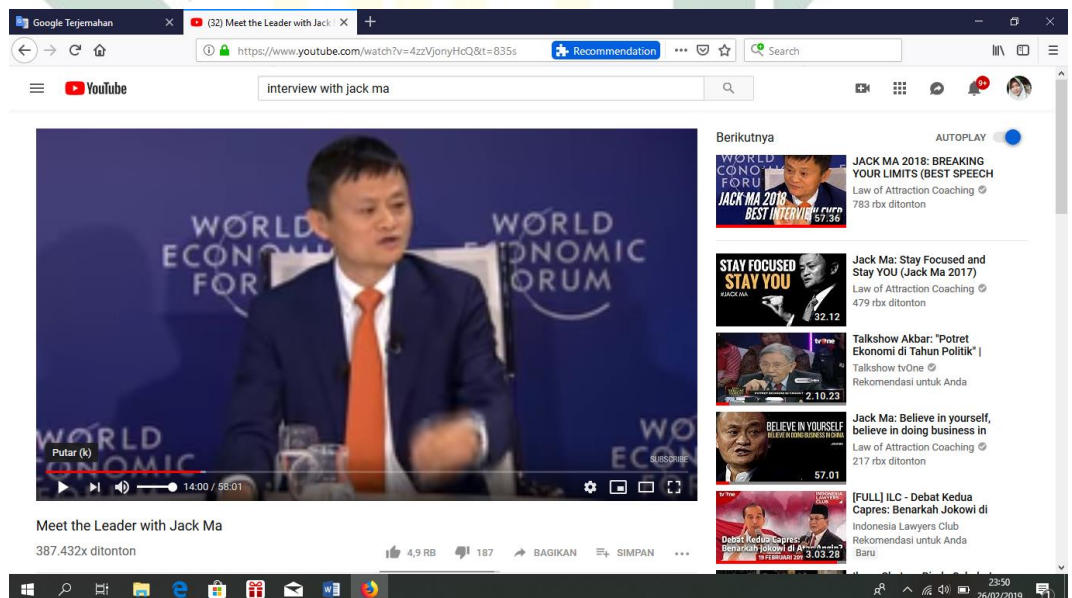
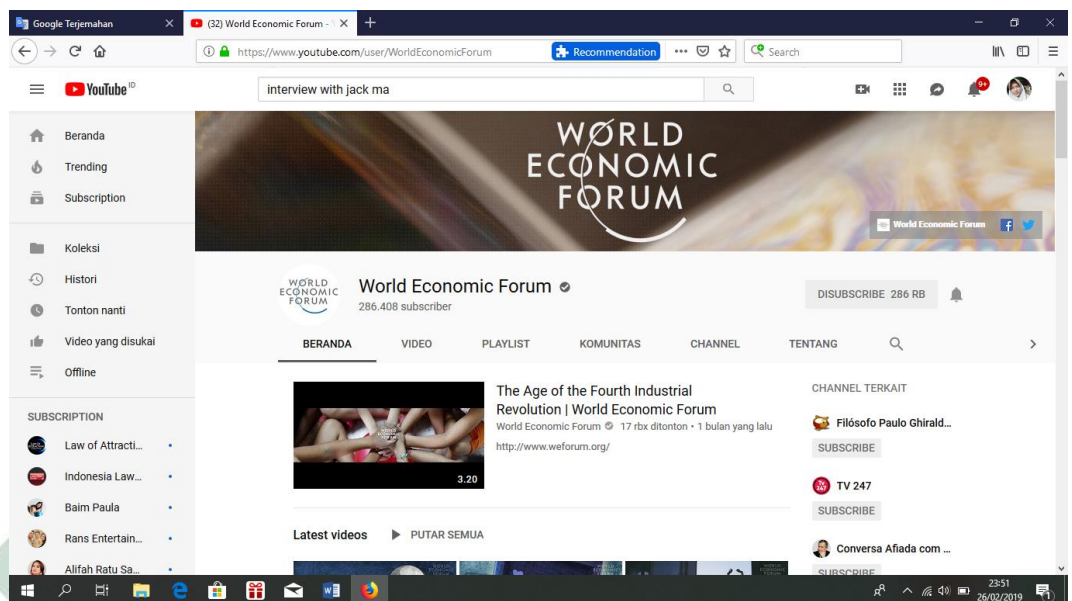


### 3.2 Research Instrument

Instruments are tools and materials used by the researchers to complete research and also is used to facilitate the researchers in collecting the data that is needed in research. Besides the result can be more accurate, complete and systematic. In the the qualitative research method, the instrument of the research was the researcher itself. The researcher as the primary one might be the most essential research instrument in this analysis. The researcher was one of the important things to gain the data in collecting, counting, classifying, analyzing and so forth. However, in conducting this research, the researcher used the other instruments to support him to do this research among them a computer and mobile phone. Mobile phones were used to open YouTube because the main data source of this research was a a video of World Economic Forum taken from YouTube. So mobile phones were very needed in this research. While computer also became very important role to assist the the researcher in completing this research among them are a computer as a tool for transcribing data of the video that will be analyzed by the researcher. Furthermore, the computer was useful to assist the the researcher in coding the data to facilitate the researcher in analyzing the positive politeness strategies used by Jack Ma. In addition, coding was also important to make it easier for the researcher to find the data when needed.



1. The researcher collected the data by searching on the YouTube channel of the World Economic Forum and downloaded the video 'Meet the Leader Jack Ma'























































**Data 17 (3/5/27)**

**Let's catch this opportunity** if you complain the other people catch it, if you catch the opportunity in bracelet now you will be the next Alibaba.

From the statement above seemed that Jack Ma tried to attract the hearer by presenting ‘include both speaker and hearer in activity’ strategy. Jack Ma uses this strategy in order to redress the FTAs in his utterance. From the word “Let's catch this opportunity”. It indicates that Jack Ma applied this strategy by inviting the hearer to be cooperative. It can be seen from the word “Let's catch” means that this word for all the hearer who heard his speech. If they want to be successful like Jack Ma, they have to take the opportunity. Although in his utterance he did not mention the word “you” or “me” but automatically it means “we” because there was the word “Let's” which indicated an invitation word.

**4.1.1.9 Assume or Assert Reciprocity**

The existence of cooperation between speaker and hearer can also claimed or forced by providing evidence of reciprocity or obligations contained between speakers and hearers. In this study, the researcher finds 5 data which contains of this strategy. The data will be presented below:

**Data 18 (1/1/3/2)**

M: So you ended your interview last year by saying we really need to pay attention to people who are 30 years old in the next 30 years and to companies that have less more than 30 employees. **I turned 30 last year so it was particularly welcome to hear this and I think for many people in the room they meet one or two of those categories so in light of that what are you most looking forward to and most scared of in the next 30 years?**

J: Yeah.. We people next to 30 years are the luckiest to period. We're a lot of challenges, a lot of things that's happening and with our knowledge,















This present study, the researcher only focuses on positive politeness strategies used by Jack Ma in 'Meet the leader' session at the World Economic Forum. Brown and Levinson (1987) presented 15 strategies in positive politeness such as notice attend to the hearer, exaggerate, intensify interest to the hearer, use in a group identity marker, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose/assert/raise common ground, joke, assert/presuppose speaker knowledge of a concern for hearer intention, offer or promise, be optimistic, include both speaker and hearer in activity, give or ask for reason, assume or assert reciprocity, and the last give gift to the hearer.

This present study, the researcher finds 47 data which consist of the positive politeness strategies in Jack Ma's utterances in 'Meet the Leader' session at the World Economic Forum. However, the researcher only finds 9 data out of 15 strategies of positive politeness. The highest strategies are 'exaggerate' which has 16 data. The second strategy is mostly used by Jack Ma is 'intensify interest to the hearer' strategies. It indicated that Jack Ma prefer to employ 'exaggerate' and 'intensify interest to the hearer' in his speech to express his feelings to the hearer. Besides, Jack Ma expressed his feeling using various way such as providing the fact, criticizing something, giving stress to the word, and giving disagreement. However, Jack Ma mostly applied positive politeness strategies by providing fact and criticizing something.

Second, the researcher analyzes the factors influencing Jack Ma in choosing the positive politeness strategies in 'Meet the Leader' session at the World Economic Forum. In this research, the researcher finds payoff factors and relevant











