

Language Politeness in Discussion Activities of Class VIII Students

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Abstract

Politeness in language is a crucial factor in influencing pupils' linguistic development and character formation. Consequently, it is imperative to consider the dimension of politeness in pupils' linguistic expressions. This study seeks to delineate the deviations and adherence to the standards of linguistic politeness observed in class discussions among Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon. This study involved 33 kids from the eighth grade. The employed data collection methods included observation, interviews, recording, field notes, and documentation. The research findings indicate two categories of linguistic politeness: compliance with politeness rules and discourse, encompassing four debates with a total of 17 utterances, wherein all forms of maxims were identified. The second category encompasses transgressions from the standards of linguistic courtesy in discourse, categorized into three maxims and three utterances. The research findings indicate that the maxim most commonly violated is that of wisdom and appreciation, observed in breaches of the courtesy principle during discussions among Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon.

Keywords: *Class Discussion; Language; Politeness Principle*



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INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a medium for societal communication. Through language, humans may convey experiences and familiarize themselves with one another. This corresponds with Chaer's (2010) assertion that language serves as a medium for communication, facilitating the expression of thoughts, ideas, concepts, or emotions. Language serves as a crucial instrument for communication in interpersonal interactions, significantly impacting human existence. Consequently, all individuals are encouraged to acquire proficiency in a language. Language pertains to the choice of lexical categories, participants, temporal context, and spatial conditions, which is further emphasized by statements that embody societal cultural norms.

Politeness is conduct demonstrated in a commendable and ethical fashion. Language politeness is intrinsically linked to the norms embraced by a culture. In a society that rigorously upholds standards and values, the use of polite language becomes a customary practice. In the realm of education, a society that prioritizes politeness would integrate courteous language as a significant component of the teaching process, especially within school systems. Language politeness is a linguistic facet that can augment the emotional intelligence of its speakers, as it pertains to communication. Speakers and listeners must not only communicate the facts but also sustain harmonious relationships. The politeness of an utterance is significantly influenced by the prevailing standards of politeness within the community that employs it (Retnosari & Pujiastuti, 2021). Leech developed roles that can assess the politeness of language usage. The principles of linguistic politeness articulated by Leech in Rahardi (2005) are exemplified by the maxim of wisdom, the maxim of generosity, the maxim of appreciation, the maxim of humility, the maxim of agreement, and the maxim of sympathy. In Indonesian culture, politeness is typically demonstrated by the use of courteous language, avoidance of direct insults, refraining from issuing commands, and showing respect for others. Consequently, the study of language politeness is essential to ascertain the degree of faults or deviations in politeness during human communication. This communication and engagement can occur anywhere and at any time, in both formal and informal contexts, including schools.

School, as an instructional setting, serves as a venue for social interaction, specifically between students and teachers, as well as among students themselves. Students, as learners, are expected to uphold proper language structure in their speech acts to adhere to the norms of the educational environment, as their choice of language reflects respect for their communication partner. Students require guidance to communicate courteously, as they represent the future generation that will navigate their own eras. Permitting students to speak impolitely will lead to a subsequent generation characterized by arrogance, rudeness, a departure from ethical and religious principles, and a deficiency in character. The rationale for selecting conversation is that it facilitates the development of students' speaking skills. Students frequently exhibit diminished focus on the nuances of polite language expression during verbal communication. During the conversation, students can cultivate an efficient learning atmosphere and enjoyable.

Through discussion, students in a class are encouraged to actively engage by participating in the issue-solving process through an enjoyable activity: small group talks of 4-5 individuals to brainstorm and reach a resolution regarding a topic. The rationale for selecting language politeness is its significance in the realm of education. Students represent the future of the nation; if they employ disrespectful language, an arrogant and rude generation devoid of ethical values will emerge. Consequently, kids must be instructed and encouraged to employ courteous language, as they represent the future that will navigate their respective eras. Furthermore, linguistic politeness constitutes a facet of character education; educational advancement is hindered when human resources exhibit deficient character. Linguistic civility is essential in the realm of schooling. The observational data indicate a variance in the amount of politeness among students. This results from the diversity in linguistic usage. Consequently, additional comprehensive investigation is required.

This research examines students' civility in language use during conversations in Class VIII of SMP Negeri 7 Ambon. The research findings indicate courteous and discourteous expressions that conform to Leech's politeness principles and Brown and Levinson's politeness methods. Statements that conform to politeness rules are deemed courteous and facilitate a more productive discourse.

The author selected the study of linguistic politeness due to the observation of several elements concerning students' civility in talks at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon. Although the majority of students' remarks

were courteous, a few were not. This can be observed when evaluated using a politeness scale. The author's interest in conducting research at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon was sparked by this. The study was carried out at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon because to its diverse student population, encompassing distinct cultural backgrounds, familial circumstances, economic statuses, and social standings. A preliminary observation reveals varying levels of politeness among students. This results from the multiplicity of their backgrounds. Various factors that affect pupils' degree of politeness include both language and non-linguistic elements.

Language politeness is a domain within pragmatics, which examines the meaning communicated by a speaker to their interlocutor (Wiranty, 2015). Consequently, the study of linguistic politeness inherently involves the examination of pragmatics. Markhamah and Sabardila (2013) assert that politeness is a communicative strategy employed by speakers to avoid feelings of pressure, entrapment, or offense. Simultaneously, Leech (in Jumanto, 2017) analyzes politeness in the context of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims. Grice's conversational maxims are frequently contravened or disregarded in social encounters. Geoffrey Leech (1983) characterizes politeness as "a strategy for circumventing conflict" that "can be quantified by the extent of effort exerted to evade conflict situations."

Leech's six politeness maxims are enumerated as follows: (1) The Maxim of Wisdom. This principle mandates that each participant in a dialogue must consistently endeavor to assist others. The Generosity Maxim; (2) The Wisdom Maxim focuses on others or the discussion partner, but the Generosity Maxim centers on oneself or the speaker; (3) The Praise Maxim. Individuals are deemed courteous when they consistently endeavor to express gratitude or offer compliments in their discourse. Nonetheless, the accolades and acknowledgment received are not exclusively for deception but are grounded in the prevailing reality; (4) The Maxim of Humility. This maxim requires speakers to exhibit humility by minimizing self-promotion; (5) The Maxim of Agreement. The maxim of agreement mandates conversational participants to reduce discord and enhance concord among themselves and others (Leech, 1993); (6) The Maxim of Sympathy. In the principle of sympathy, each interlocutor should enhance their empathetic disposition. Sympathy is extended not only to individuals facing adversity but also to those enjoying prosperity.

This study's pertinent research encompasses "Application of Principles of Linguistic Politeness in Indonesian Language Learning Communication at MTs Muhammadiyah Baruamba Bumiayu in 2014" authored by Novita Fitriyani (2014). The study by Novita Fitriyani sought to elucidate the implementation of linguistic politeness rules in Indonesian language learning communication at Mts Muhammadiyah Baruamba Bumiayu in 2014. Research titled "Violation of Politeness Principles in the "Perbukers" Program by Dwi Kurniasi (2012)." The research type is descriptive qualitative, using a pragmatic approach. Pragmatics is used to analyze meaning in relation to speech situations. The similarity between this research and the research conducted by the researcher is that both examine the language studied from the perspective of linguistic politeness.

METHODS

This research on language politeness in discussion activities among Class VII students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon uses a descriptive research type with a qualitative approach (Moleong, 2017). This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon, located in Poka. The research data for this study is qualitative data in the form of data on language politeness exhibited by students in the classroom being studied. The data sources for this research are the 33 students in class VIII of SMP Negeri 7 Ambon, which allows for the generation of data relevant to the research focus on language politeness in discussions during Indonesian language learning. The data collection techniques used in this study are: (1) observation; (2) interviews; (3) documentation; (4) field notes; (5) recording. The data collection instruments in this study are: (1) field notes; (2) a mobile phone or recording device; (3) observation sheets; (4) an interview guide. Data analysis is the process of systematically tracking and organizing interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials collected to improve understanding of the materials so that they can be presented to others. The collected data was then analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed deviations and conformity to the standards of linguistic politeness, as evidenced by the analysis of 5 utterances extracted from the data transcripts. Among these 5 utterances, there were 17 occurrences of compliance with the standards of linguistic politeness and 8 occurrences of deviance from these rules.

Compliance with the Principle of Linguistic Politeness in Discussion. Adherence to the standards of linguistic courtesy in classroom discussions among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon, encompassing 17 utterances across four discussion topics. The analysis revealed the presence of various maxims in accordance with the principle of politeness: wisdom (4 data points), praise (3 data points), generosity (3 data points), modesty (3 data points), agreement (4 data points), and sympathy (1 data point).

Maxim of Wisdom

Data 1

Moderator: Group 1, do you have any questions?

Discussion participants: Yes

Moderator: Please

Context: This statement was made by the moderator of Group 2 to invite discussion participants to ask questions or offer rebuttals.

Data 2

Moderator: We will explain the questions from groups one and two.

Presenter: For group one, an example of persuasive text can be found on page 176 of the book, and for group two, which part are you still confused about?

Discussion participant: Okay, thank you.

Moderator: Okay, thank you.

Context: The utterance in data 2 occurred during a discussion activity at the second meeting, which discussed the persuasive text presented by group two.

Data 3

Moderator: Good morning, teacher. Good morning, everyone. Shalom

Discussion participant: Shalom

Moderator: Thank you for the opportunity given by the teacher to group one, we will now present the results of our group discussion. To my friend, please.

Context: This utterance was delivered by the moderator, who expressed gratitude as a response to the teacher for opening the discussion process and allowing the groups to give their presentations.

Data 4

Moderator: Does anyone from Group Three have any questions?

Discussion participant: I want to ask a question. Where did the group get their understanding of persuasion? Because that understanding is not in our book.

Presenter: We apologize, the understanding we took from the internet is different, but the understanding of the review text remains the same.

Context: The discussion participant's statement to the presenting group described a question seeking to confirm the same source related to the material presented, and the presenting group was then able to answer in a good and polite manner.

Maxim Reward

Data 1

Moderator: We will explain the questions from groups one and two.

Presenter: For group one, an example of persuasive text can be found on page 176 of the book, and for

group two, which part are you still confused about?

Discussion participant: Okay, thank you.

Context: In the above statement, the discussion participant thanks the presenter for answering the question.

Data 2

Moderator: Do you understand?

Discussion participant: The explanation from group two was excellent. Thank you.

Context: This statement was made by a discussion participant who expressed acceptance of the answer from Group 2 and did not forget to express gratitude as a form of appreciation for the answer presented or received from the presenting group.

Maxim Generosity

Data 1

Moderator: Group 1, do you have any questions?

Presenter: Yes

Discussion participant: Please

Context: This statement was made by the moderator to open the question session with a question.

Data 2

Presenter: The characters in the dialog are the characters in the play, while the epilog is the final part of the play.

Moderator: Do you understand?

Discussion participant: The explanation from group two was excellent. Thank you.

Context: This statement was made by the moderator to ensure that the presenters' answers were sufficient to address the questions asked.

Maxim Simplicity

Data 1

Presenter: Does Group Four understand?

Moderator: Yes

Discussion participant: Please excuse any mistakes.

Context: This statement was delivered by the moderator to conclude the discussion process smoothly and simultaneously demonstrate humility for the discussion process that had taken place, using the word "sorry."

Data 2

Moderator: For group two, what haven't you understood yet?

Discussion participants: We disagree with the explanation regarding the structure of persuasive texts because it needs to be explained clearly.

Presenter: Okay, we will explain it again.

Context: The utterances in this conversation indicate disagreement from the discussion participants, so the presenter decided to re-explain for clarity and understanding by the participants.

Maxim Evaporation

Data 1

Discussion participant: What I want to ask is, what is meant by prolog, dialog, and prolog?

Presenter: The prolog is the opening part of the dialog drama.

Discussion participant: Sir (shouting while raising hand)

Moderator: Don't interrupt, we haven't finished explaining, uh, explaining.

Context: In this situation, the moderator directly takes over to guide the Q&A process smoothly when one of the discussion participants interrupts the presenter while they are trying to give an answer.

Data 2

Presenter: Does Group Four understand?

Moderator: Yes

Discussion participant: Please excuse any mistakes.

Context: This statement was delivered by the moderator to conclude the discussion process smoothly and simultaneously demonstrate humility for the discussion process that had taken place, using the word "sorry."

Maxim Sympathy

Data 1

Discussion participant: Read loudly (while shouting)

Moderator: Quiet! That's just how he sounds (that's just his voice).

Context: This utterance follows the moderator's reprimand of the students; the moderator then provides an explanation to de-escalate the situation.

Deviations from the Principle of Linguistic Politeness in Discussion. In communication, particularly during conversations, it is essential to examine not only the standards of speaking but also the recognition of departures from linguistic etiquette. This study revealed that the conversation activities of Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon included 8 utterances that violated the norms of civility. The deviations from the politeness principle encompass the maxims of wisdom, appreciation, modesty, and agreement. No discrepancies were identified in the principles of generosity and empathy.

Maxim of Wisdom

Data 1

Presenter: Persuasive text is text that contains an invitation or persuasion.

Discussion participant: It's not fast enough (the explanation is too fast).

Presenter: Sorry, I will explain again.

Context: This statement was made by a discussion participant directly to the presentation group, who had just finished their presentation. The statement subtly contains a hint of irony.

Data 2

Presenter: Drama is...

Discussion participant: Read aloud (shouting)

Context: This statement was made by a discussion participant to Group 2, the presenting team, but some discussion participants were not satisfied with the presenter's tone of voice. The reprimand was delivered using harsh language and seemed to be an order accompanied by a loud (shouting) voice.

Maxim of Cooperation

Data 1

Presenter: The prolog is the opening part of the dialog drama.

Discussion participant: Sir (shouting while raising hand)

Moderator: Please don't interrupt, we haven't finished explaining, uh, explaining.

Context: In this discussion, students raised their hands while speaking while the presenter was giving an answer.

Compliance with the Principle of Linguistic Politeness in Discussion, Maxim of Wisdom. In this principle of wisdom, the speaker ought to diminish their own self-interest and enhance the advantage for others during discourse. The speaker should exhibit politeness, wisdom, refrain from overwhelming the listener, and employ delicate language when conversing with people. Compliance with the principle of wisdom is marked by nuanced language in questioning, articulating viewpoints, or dissenting from the

responses of other participants, even when evaluating other groups. For instance, employing terms such as "apologies," "gratitude," "please," "kindly," and "assistance," or utilizing personal pronouns like "he," "Mr.," "Mrs.," etc. Furthermore, speakers are prohibited from employing sarcasm or imposing their viewpoints on others or organizations. Furthermore, the cost-benefit scale pertains to the extent of costs and gains arising from a speaking act in a certain utterance. The more the detriment to the speaker caused by the utterance, the more it will be deemed polite. Conversely, the greater the narrative. The greater the speaker's self-benefit, the more the utterance will be deemed disrespectful.

The speech patterns seen in the data collected from recordings of the student conversation process during the initial class meeting. The statement exemplifies compliance with the courtesy precept, as the moderator optimizes the advantages for discussion participants by utilizing the allotted time for their inquiries. The utterance of the term "silahkan" (please) by the moderator during the discourse about theater materials. Subsequent to the material presentation by the next group, the moderator is tasked with posing questions to the discussion participants to elucidate their understanding of the content and address any ambiguities, thereby facilitating inquiries and obtaining clarifications from the presenter. Subsequently, when the moderator encouraged discussion members to pose questions, an individual from group 1 expressed a desire to inquire, prompting the moderator to respond, "Please." This indicates that the moderator let the participant to inquire. Consequently, the term "Please" in that statement constitutes an act of acquiescence. Indicator 1 in the Maxim of Wisdom, which emphasizes the use of courteous diction, includes the example "please."

Maxim Reward. The idea of maximum regard mandates that each participant in a discourse should enhance respect for others while diminishing self-disrespect. Polite speech is characterized by its ability to express gratitude for others, hence eliciting feelings of pleasure. Adherence to the highest standards of appreciation in discussion activities is exemplified by participants who respect differing opinions, offer constructive criticism, provide sincere commendation, express gratitude when receiving feedback, refrain from embarrassing speakers in public forums, and avoid direct speech when critiquing others.

The speech format in the data is derived from study recordings of the student discussion process in class, conducted during the second meeting, which addressed persuasive texts as elucidated by participants from groups one and three. Following the initiation of the learning activity by the teacher and the subsequent discussion, group one completed their presentation and allowed the attendees to pose questions. A participant in the conversation requested the presenting group to clarify their explanation, since they remained perplexed by the prior elucidation. Upon receiving the presenter's response, they acknowledged it by stating, "Okay, thank you," demonstrating respect and courtesy. The expression "Okay, thank you" articulated by the participant in the debate exemplifies compliance with the maxim of appreciation, specifically indicator 4: "expressing gratitude upon receiving responses or opinions from others."

Maxim Generosity. This profound generosity necessitates that participants in discourse minimize their personal gains and maximize their losses. An utterance will be considered polite if the speaker demonstrates respect for others by optimizing the advantages for their conversational partner. Adherence to the maxim of compassion in this debate activity is characterized by the speaker's readiness to allow others to pose questions, express dissent, or critique the speaker's viewpoints. Moreover, speakers issue instructions or refusals through interrogative sentences. Governance through a query conveys greater politeness than a directive. Presented above is the information regarding adherence to the maximum charity contribution.

Maxim Simplicity. The principle of simplicity, commonly known as humility, requires every speaker to minimize self-praise and maximize self-criticism. Compliance with the maxim of moderation in this discussion activity is marked by the speaker's consistently positive attitude toward other participants or groups, and not highlighting or boasting about the group's or their own strengths to others. Additionally, speakers give commands or refusals using question sentences. Phrasing a request as a question will sound more polite than using a command.

Maxim Conspiracy. The principle of participant consensus underscores their ability to establish mutual

agreement during the storytelling process. An utterance is deemed polite when the speaker and listener optimize their compatibility. Adherence to the consensus in class discussions is defined by participants' readiness to endorse the accurate viewpoint despite prior inaccuracies, their ability to articulate relevant points, and their acceptance of the discussion's outcomes. The adherence to the principle of consensus is elaborated in the subsequent data. Participants and interlocutors must adhere to the idea of consensus by maintaining politeness and refraining from interrupting or directly contradicting the speaker. The conversation participants optimize consensus and reduce dissent among the speakers.

Maxim Sympathy. In this maxim of sympathy, it is hoped that participants can maximize their sympathetic attitude toward others. Speech will feel polite if someone can show empathy and not be cynical toward others. Adherence to this maxim is characterized by the speaker's willingness to offer sincere support to others whose opinions are correct, and to show empathy toward others who are wrong. The form of speech was obtained from research recordings during the discussion process by students in the classroom, which covered material on drama texts and took place in the first meeting, followed by a presentation of the material by group two. The utterance in the data above occurred when one of the discussion participants shouted at the presenter to read the material in a slightly louder voice so it could be heard well, but the moderator responded by saying, "Quiet! That's just how his voice is."

Deviations from the Principle of Linguistic Politeness in Discussions, Maxim of Wisdom. In this principle of wisdom, the speaker ought to diminish their own self-interest and enhance the advantage for others when communicating. The speaker should exhibit politeness, wisdom, refrain from overwhelming the listener, and employ delicate language when communicating with people. This discussion activity deviates from the principle of wisdom through the employment of abrasive language in questioning, articulating opinions, and countering others' viewpoints, thereby imposing personal perspectives and making sarcastic comments towards fellow participants, which can diminish the advantages for others. The form of speech in the data was obtained thru recordings of the discussion process among students, which took place during the second meeting. The presentation of the material by group three, who presented material on persuasive texts. The utterance occurred when the speaker delivered the material very quickly, causing the discussion participants to comment, "It's not fast enough." By "not fast enough," they meant the explanation was too fast. The utterance was made to encourage the speaker to re-explain the material a little more slowly.

Maxim Award. Speech is considered polite if it can show appreciation for others, making them feel good. Deviations from this maxim are characterized by a lack of respect for others, giving critical remarks that put others down, and speaking in a way that belittles others. The form of speech in the data was obtained thru research recordings made during student discussion activities in the classroom, which took place in the first meeting. Presentation of material by group two, which discussed drama texts. The incident occurred when the presenter's voice volume was very low, causing one of the discussion participants to shout for the volume to be increased so it could be heard properly. The participant's statement from the discussion was "Read aloud."

Maxim Agreement. The form of speech from the data was obtained thru research recordings of student discussions conducted during the first meeting. Presentation of the material by group two, which discussed drama texts. The utterance occurred when one of the discussion participants raised their hand and called the teacher "Sir" while the presenter was speaking, showing a lack of courtesy by directly interrupting the presenter while they were talking. This contains a deviation from the maximum reward with the type of indicator being indicator 6, "using direct speech when wanting to give criticism."

CONCLUSION

This study revealed deviations from the principle of linguistic politeness in the discussion activities of Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon, with a total of eight identified utterances, specifically

concerning the principles of: (a) Maxim Tact, (b) Maxim Approbation, and (c) Maxim Agreement. Class VIII students at SMP Negeri 7 Ambon demonstrated adherence to the principle of civility in class discussions through the following maxims: tact, approval, generosity, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Of these maxims, the one most consistently observed was the tact maxim. In that principle of wisdom, the most commonly adhered to criterion is allowing other organizations or individuals to pose inquiries, critique, or react. The total number of utterances conforming to the notion of total linguistic politeness is 25. The primary subject exhibiting variances in the application of maxims across politeness categories is the first topic, namely Drama Text. Deviations from the principle of politeness in class discussion activities of Class VIII students at Smp Negeri 7 Ambon, such as deviations from the maxims of tact, approbation, modesty, and agreement. Among those maxims, the one most frequently distorted is the maxim of wisdom and appreciation.

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