

The Characteristics of Language Politeness in Students' WhatsApp Messages to Lecturers

Sri Nur Yuliawati¹, Hazma², Krisna Yudha Bakhti³

^{1,2,3} Politeknik Negeri Bandung

Email: ¹ srinuryuli@polban.ac.id, ² hazma@polban.ac.id, ³ krisna.yudha@polban.ac.id

Abstract: This study is aimed to describe the characteristics of language politeness in students' WhatsApp (WA) messages to their lecturers. The research method used was a descriptive method with data consisting of 460 WA messages from 75 students. From this study, it is revealed that 88.7% of the characteristic of students' WA message structure begin with greetings, an apology for sending WA message, self-introduction, message, and thanks with greetings. 82.6% of WA messages are characterized by conversational language style in which they are a fully structured idea which represented using subject and predicate with several omissions in a certain part. The contents of the WA messages consist of 20% of the final project topics such as clarifying supervising schedule, discussing the content of final project, informing the schedule of final project presentation; 66.6% of WA messages contain lecture topics such as informing rescheduled lectures, asking about assignments, asking about score, permission for being absent; and 13.4% of WA messages contain other topics such as felicitations and condolences. Thus, the WA messages sent by the students of Politeknik Negeri Bandung to their lecturers show the characteristics of language politeness.

Keywords: *characteristics, language politeness, WhatsApp*

Introduction

A phrase "a language shows a nation" means both bad and good nature and character of people are seen from their speech or language". The phrase seems to have less attention from the public currently. Politeness in a language is not seen when students communicate with their parents and friends (Wardoyo, 2014). In fact, according to (Nur, Afrinda, & Sartika, 2018), language reflects one's personality. It means that when someone is communicating using his language, he can explore the potential of his language, able to use his language properly, correctly, and politely reflect his nature and personality.

Politeness has a very important role in communication. While communicating, it is not only conveying ideas but also considering the cultural norms. Language politeness has also an important role in everyone's language ability. Someone is considered to be a good person if he always uses good language and politeness. Conversely, if someone always uses abusive and impolite language, he is considered to be a bad person. According to (Rohali, 2011), knowing and applying the principles of politeness and strategies of language modesty in daily communication can create harmony in social life. The principle of politeness and the language politeness strategy from a socio-pragmatic point of view can be used as a means for character education. Besides, there is a positive influence of language attitudes on the politeness of students' language (Afriana & Mandala, 2018).

Establishing harmony of social interaction and effective communication requires language politeness. When someone wants to convey a message, the context must be taken into accounts, such as receiver(s), situation, and language (word choices) so that the message can be understood correctly and effectively. In both oral and written communication including in written messages through WhatsApp (WA), eastern societies always maintain language etiquette and politeness. This language politeness should become a habit for everyone in communicating both directly and through communication devices such as mobile phones. With

the features of calling service, SMS, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp found on mobile phones, people can communicate directly from distances. At present, as an instance, the way of communication between students and lecturers has changed because of the use of mobile phones. For this reason, students can now connect to and communicate anything with their lecturers quickly and easily.

WA is one of the social media that mostly used by society because it is considered more effective and efficient. This application is used by the students of Politeknik Negeri Bandung (Polban) to communicate with their lecturers. While communicating with the lecturers, the speed and ease of communication using WA raises the issue of language politeness which is sometimes forgotten by the students. The conversational language used by the students is allegedly sometimes used in WA messages addressed to the lecturers so that their messages show a lack of politeness. It is important to examine the characteristics of language politeness in the students' WA messages to their lecturers.

Aspects of politeness should be considered while communicating both in oral and written language. Politeness is a form of communicative behavior that is universally found in human languages and cultures. Furthermore, politeness is to speak or behave to give benefit or value to another person(s) especially the person(s) you are conversing with (Leech, 2014). Leech in (Liu, 2017) termed "maxim" for the term of language politeness principle. It is explained that communication will create politeness if a) speaker tries to minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other (tact maxim); b) speaker tries to minimize benefit to self and maximizing cost to self (generosity maxim); c) speaker tries to minimize dispraise of other and maximize praise of other (approbation maxim); d) speaker minimizes praise of self and maximizes dispraise of self (modesty maxim); e) speaker tends to maximize agreement between self and other people and minimize disagreement between self and other (agreement maxim); f) speaker minimizes antipathy between self and other and maximizes sympathy between self and other (sympathy maxim).

Studies on language politeness have been conducted by several researchers. Shahrzad & Moini (2016) conducted a study on the positive and negative politeness strategies used by male and female students as foreign language learners in sending Short Message Service (SMS) to their professor. Although female students prefer to use negative strategies, the obtained result showed that there was no significant difference between gender and the use of politeness strategies in their SMS to their professor. Alsout & Khedri (2019) explored the politeness in Libyan postgraduate students' email requests to their lecturers. This study revealed that the Libyan postgraduate students applied mostly negative politeness strategies more than the other politeness; they used a high level of directness and displayed a fundamental inadequacy in the use of politeness strategies. Mulyono, Amalia, & Suryoputro (2019) examined the politeness strategies used by teachers and students. The finding of the study showed that students employed more politeness strategies than their teachers. This is because Indonesian students perceived that teachers to be a higher social class where students are required to highly respect them. Faiz & Lin (2014) conducted a study of politeness strategies in written discourse with the focus on the use of social greetings on emails and SMS from students to lecturers in a private university in Malaysia. The study showed that most students used informal greetings to begin their messages to their lecturers. It means that they failed to employ appropriate politeness strategies that could lessen face-threatening acts between themselves and their lecturers. Farida & Yuliana (2019) studied politeness strategies used by Sundanese students when sending text messages to their lecturers via WhatsApp chat application. This study revealed that the students used all politeness strategies with negative as the most used strategy.

Most previous studies on language politeness focus on investigating the politeness strategy used by students. Meanwhile, the present study is conducted to investigate the characteristics of language politeness in students' WA messages to their lecturers.

Method

This study describes the characteristics of language politeness in students' WA messages to their lecturers. The data was 460 WA messages sent by 39 engineering students and 36 non-engineering students to five lecturers; two Bahasa Indonesia lecturers, Physics lecturer, Mathematics lecturer, and English lecturer.

This study began with a literature review analysis to obtain as complete and accurate information as possible regarding the use of language in WA messages and language politeness. The next step is creating the instrument to identify and finally analyzing language politeness characteristics in students' WA messages using the theory proposed by Leech.

Results and Discussion

The Structure of Students' WA Message

To analyze the characteristics of politeness in students' WA message structure, a theory on language politeness proposed by Leech was carried out. From this study, it is obtained that 88.7% of the students' WA messages are started with greetings, an apology for sending WA message, self-introduction, message, and thanks with greetings. This structure is in line with the language politeness proposed by Leech. Greetings show tact maxim; an apology for sending WA messages shows generosity maxim; self-introduction shows modesty maxim; conveying the message briefly shows agreement maxim; expressing thanks with greetings shows the sympathy maxim. The following is the example of a complete WA message structure.

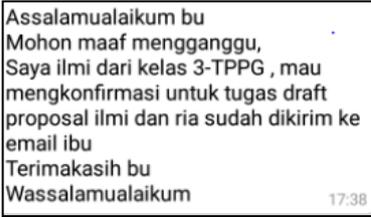


Figure 1 a complete WA message structure

An incomplete structure of WA messages was also found in 11.3% of students' WA messages. The incomplete structure is caused by the absence of apology for sending WA messages and thanking with a greeting at the end of the messages. The following is an example of an incomplete WA message structure.

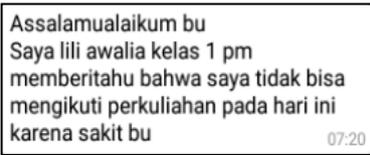


Figure 2 an incomplete WA message structure

The Language Style of Students' WA Message

There are 82.6% of students' WA messages are conveyed in a conversational style. This style has a complete structure and contains ideas represented using subject and predicate with several omissions in certain parts. This is in line with Keraf (Hardianto, Widayati, & Sucipto, 2017) who stated that conversational language is a language that uses popular and conversational words. The syntactic and morphological aspects are also often ignored or omitted, but the language is still complete. Here is the example of a conversation style.

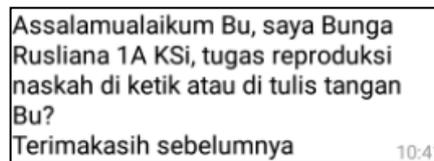


Figure 3 WA message in a conversational style

The language politeness is related to grammar and choice of words. The words must be standard words. There are 17.3% of language politeness deviation which are caused by the use of non-standard words such as *gak*, *fix*, *gitu ya oke*, *gak papa*, *ma sama*, *kayaknya*, etc.

The Content of Students' WA Message

The content of students' WA messages shows politeness because the messages are related to the students' academic activities. 20% of WA messages are about the final project such as clarifying supervising schedule, discussing the content of final project, informing the schedule of final project presentation; 66.6% of WA messages are about lecture such as informing lecture's schedule, asking about assignments, asking about score, asking for a permission for being absent; and 13.4% of WA messages are about other topics such as felicitations and condolences. Thus, the content of WA messages sent by the students of Politeknik Negeri Bandung to their lecturers shows the characteristics of language politeness. The contents of students' WA messages are as follows.

<p>Forwarded</p> <p>Assalamu'alaikum bu, mohon maaf mengganggu, saya afghan dari D4 refri bu, bu maaf izin mengingatkan bahwa hari ini pukul 10 di ruang B bengkel refri, akan diadakan sidang atas nama afghan dan ibu sebagai penguji 3. Terima kasih bu</p> <p>15:08</p>	<p>Assalamualaikum bu maaf saya ganggu waktu istirahatnya. saya Renaldy Saleh dari kelas 1-TPJJ. saya ingin konfirmasi kalau saya sudah mengirim email mengenai tugas daftar pustaka. sebelumnya terimakasih bu</p> <p>21:18</p>
<p>Forwarded</p> <p>assalamualaikum, selamat malam. mohon maaf mengganggu waktunya. saya izin bertanya. apakah nilai akhir saya baik? dikarenakan saya berkali-kali tidak masuk karena sakit, saya takut ada beberapa tugas yang tidak masuk. apabila nilai saya kurang baik, apakah saya boleh meminta tugas tambahan untuk membuat nilai saya sampai baik? terimakasih, ibu</p> <p>11:41</p>	<p>Assalamialaikum Ibu. Saya Laela dari 3-MPI 2015. Ibu bagaimana kabarnya? Semoga sehat aamiin. Ibu, kebetulan Laela dan beberapa teman sedang melakukan penelitian, kami sudah ada kuesionernya tapi masih sedikit kebingungan menggunakan analisis apa. Jika Ibu ada waktu luang, apakah boleh kami ingin berkonsultasi dengan Ibu? Terima kasih 😊</p> <p>14:24</p>

Figure 4 Content of WA message

Conclusion

This study describes the characteristics of language politeness in students' WhatsApp (WA) messages to their lecturers. Based on the analysis, it is revealed that students' WA structure is characterized by greetings, an apology for sending WA message, self-introduction, message, and thanks with greetings. Most students WA messages are characterized by conversational language style which means the messages have complete structure and contain ideas that are represented using subject and predicate with several omissions in a certain part. Besides, WA messages are about the final project and lecture topics such as clarifying the supervising schedule, discussing the content of the final project, informing the schedule of final project presentation, informing rescheduled lectures, asking about assignments, asking about the score, asking for permission for being absent. Other topics are about felicitations and condolences. This study indicates that the WA messages sent by the students of Politeknik Negeri Bandung to their lecturers show the characteristics of language politeness.

Acknowledgments

This research has been funded by Politeknik Negeri Bandung through The Unit of Research and Community Service for participation in the 4th International Conference on Art, Language, and Culture (ICALC).

References

- Afriana, & Mandala, R. S. (2018). Kesantunan Berbahasa Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Mahasiswa Universitas Putera Batam. *Jurnal Basis UPB*, 5(2), 43-52.
- Alsout, E., & Khedri, M. (2019). Politeness in Libyan Postgraduate Students' E-mail Requests Towards Lecturers. *Journal of Language Communication*, 6(1), 69-86.
- Faiz, H., & Lin, O. M. (2014). Use of Greetings in Messages From Students to Lecturers at A Hospitality College. *BERJAYA Journal of Services & Management*, 2, 95-101.
- Farida, & Yuliana, D. (2019). Politeness Strategies in WhatsApp Text Messaging Between Sundanese Students and Lecturers. *Conference Proceedings: Second Conference on Language, Literature, Education, and Culture (ICOLLITE 2018)*, 257, 172-175. Retrieved from www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/icollite-18/55915094
- Hardianto, M., Widayati, W., & Sucipto. (2017). Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa Pada Naskah Pidato Presiden Soekarno. *FENOMENA*, 4(2), 88-101.
- Leech, G. (2014). *The Pragmatics of politeness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Liu, L. (2017). Application of Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle in Class Question-Answer Process. *Theory and Practical in Language Studies*, 7(7), 563-569.
- Mulyono, H., Amalia, D. R., & Suryoputro, G. (2019). Politeness Strategies in Teacher-Student WhatsApp Communication. *A Journal of Language Teaching-Learning*, 58, 295-318.
- Nur, M. S., Afrinda, P. D., & Sartika, R. (2018). Kesantunan Berbahasa Dalam WhatsApp (WA) Mahasiswa Terhadap Dosen Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa STKIP PGRI Sumbar*.
- Rohali. (2011). Kesantunan Berbahasa Sebagai Pilar Pendidikan Karakter: Perspektif Sociopragmatik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 1(1), 74-97.
- Shahrzad, E., & Moini, R. M. (2016). Politeness Strategies Used in Text Messaging: pragmatic Competence in An Asymmetrical Power Relation of Teacher-Students. *SAGE Open*,

1-13. doi:10.1177/2158244016632288

Wardoyo, C. (2014). Realisasi kesantunan mahasiswa Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung dalam berkomunikasi menggunakan Short Message Service (SMS). *Makalah Prosiding Seminar Tahunan Linguistik Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (SETALI)*.