

# The Development of The Instrument of Politeness in The Language Used by Teachers in The Learning Process

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**Abstract**—The purposes of this study are 1) to find out the instrument of politeness in the language used by teachers in the learning process using language politeness theory and 2) to discover the level of validity and reliability of the developed instrument of politeness in the language used by teachers in the learning process. The method used in this study was research and development (R&D) approach. Through this approach, the instrument was developed to be used to measure the politeness in the language used by teachers to communicate with students during the learning process. The respondents in this study were elementary school teachers who were both civil servants and non-civil servants in Makassar. The number of respondents was 400 teachers. The instrument validation was carried out by material experts, measurement experts, and linguists (expert judgment). The type of test validity used was corrected item-total correlation, and the reliability was measured using the Cronbach alpha method. Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that the developed instrument of politeness in the language used by teachers in the learning process consists of 6 politeness maxims, namely the modesty maxim, the agreement maxim, the generosity maxim, the sympathy maxim, the approbation maxim, and the tact maxim. The six politeness maxims are predicted to be able to measure the level of the teachers' politeness used in the learning process. It is evident from the results of the instrument testing which shows that the instrument has met the standards of both content validity and constructed validity. In addition, the developed instrument has also met reliability standards.

**Keywords**—*language politeness, instruments, validity, reliability, communication*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of language in expressing politeness in the learning process has been studied by many [1]–[5]. Those studies show that in the learning process, politeness in language use plays an important role in giving aid to achieve learning objectives. Some studies indicate that how teachers use politeness in the language to communicate with their students positively affects the learning improvement, academic motivation, and students' awareness to achieve their learning goals [6], [7]. On the other hand, the impoliteness in language used by teachers during the learning process negatively influences students' achievements and awareness to study [8].

Politeness is one of the language aspects that teachers have to be concerned about when making interactions with

their students at schools because how teachers communicate with students indirectly affect students' behavior, even their academic achievements [9]. Yusri [9] added that most teachers who often violate politeness principles when communicating with students are not favored by students. This will certainly affect students' learning motivation. Language politeness or impoliteness, especially in verbal communication, can be seen from several indicators. One of them is the presence of politeness maxims in the utterances. The more politeness maxims are present in an utterance, the more polite the utterance is.

Most studies about language politeness in Indonesia used qualitative method [9][10][11][12]. Those studies merely identified utterances using the theory of linguistic politeness. Hence the researchers could only conclude whether the utterances were polite and vice versa. Meanwhile, the limitations of some research on language politeness using quantitative approach were caused by the lack of instruments of language politeness that could be used. This study aims (1) to discover the development process of teachers' language politeness instruments in the learning process using the language politeness theory and (2) to find out the levels of validity and reliability of the teachers' language politeness instruments in the learning process which was being developed.

The theory used to develop the language politeness instruments in the current study is the theory proposed by Levinson [13]. Levinson described maxims that are followed universally to show politeness in language use. These maxims are used as the benchmarks for the politeness in teachers' language use. Politeness maxims consist of the tact maxim, the generosity maxim, the approbation maxim, the modesty maxim, the agreement maxim, and the sympathy maxim. When an utterance contains those maxims, it can be categorized as a polite utterance. However, if an utterance violates those maxims, it is considered an impolite utterance. The current study is important to conduct because, in the learning process, teachers play a dominant role in affecting students' academic achievements, as supported by Solanki [14], Yu [15]. Their studies show that a number of factors influence students' learning motivation, but teachers' quality is the most important factor in students' academic performance. The teachers' quality focused in the current study is how teachers communicate with students in the learning process.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The current study used to research and development (R&D) approach. With this approach, instruments were developed to be used to measure politeness in teachers' language use when they communicate with their students during the learning process. The following are the procedures taken to develop the instruments of politeness in teachers' language use in the learning process:

- Investigated the theory about variables and determined the indicators to measure the variables
- Determined the types of instruments to be used according to the characteristics of the investigated variables and the respondents of the research
- Composed the outlines of the instrument based on the indicators determined in the theoretical review
- Composed question items based on the outlines of the instrument.
- Conducted a readability test on the instrument to find out the easiness or the difficulty of the sentences.
- Performed instrument validation by the material experts, the measurement experts, and the linguists (expert judgment).
- Conducted an instrument trial to targets that had similar characteristics with the research respondents.
- A quality test based on the instrument's validity and reliability.

Data collection was carried out by conducting interviews, observation, and questionnaires. The respondents of the current research were 400 teachers of elementary schools in Makassar, both as national civil servants and non-national civil servants. Test validity used corrected item-total correlation technique. The analysis involved correlating the score of each item with the total score and correcting overestimated correlation coefficient values. The testing criteria were if  $r_{\text{count}} \geq r_{\text{table}}$  (2-sided test with the sig. 0.05), the instrument or items of the questions correlated significantly to the total score (declared valid). However, if  $r_{\text{count}} < r_{\text{table}}$  (2-sided test with the sig. 0.05), the instrument or question items did not significantly correlate to the total score (declared invalid). Reliability was measured using *Cronbach alpha* method. If the alpha value was  $> 0.7$ , it means that reliability was sufficient. However, if the alpha was  $> 0.80$ , it suggests all items were reliable, and all tests were internally consistent because they had strong reliability [16].

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Development of Construct Measurement Instrument

The theory used to develop the construct measurement instrument of politeness in teachers' language use was proposed by Levinson [13] who divided language politeness into 6 maxims. Those maxims became the foundation to develop the instrument items. It can be clearly seen from the table below:

TABLE I. CONSTRUCT MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT OF POLITENESS IN LANGUAGE USE

No	Indicators	Operational Definitions of Variables	Question Items
1	The Tact Maxim	The concept of this maxim is to minimize harms to others and to maximize benefits to others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I don't blame students if they don't do homework or come late to school.</li> <li>2. When some students quarrel, I try not to blame anyone.</li> <li>3. When some students get a low score in my subject, I won't criticize or scold them.</li> <li>4. I won't scold students directly in front of other students when they make a scene in the classroom.</li> </ol>
2	The Generosity Maxim	The concept of this maxim is to minimize benefits to self and to maximize sacrifices to self.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When students misunderstand about the homework instruction I have given, I will say, "It's okay, I might give an unclear instruction yesterday."</li> <li>2. When students say they don't understand the lesson I have explained, I will say, "It's fine, I will explain it again. Maybe I explained it too fast earlier."</li> <li>3. When my students achieve something, I won't say, "Take a look at his teacher!" in front of other students.</li> <li>4. When students forget to bring their textbook or their homework, I will say, "It's okay. I might forget to remind you yesterday, but don't forget to bring it tomorrow."</li> </ol>
3	The Approbation Maxim	The concept of this maxim is to minimize the criticism to others and to maximize the praise to others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I never scold or criticize students directly even though they make mistakes or break school rules.</li> <li>2. I never scold students in front of their friends even though they don't do or turn in their homework.</li> <li>3. I always praise students who are brave to do the task in front of the class.</li> <li>4. I always praise students who dress nicely and behave politely.</li> </ol>
4	The Modesty Maxim	The concept of this maxim is to minimize praise to self and to maximize critics to self.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I never mention my achievements in front of my students during the learning process or outside the classroom.</li> <li>2. I never praise myself in front of students.</li> <li>3. I will apologize and admit my mistake when I explain something too fast to my students.</li> <li>4. I will apologize and admit my mistake when I come late to the class.</li> </ol>
5	The Agreement Maxim	The concept of this maxim is to minimize disagreement between self and others and to maximize agreement between self and others.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When students cannot understand the lesson easily, I will explain the lesson slowly.</li> <li>2. When students like to be accompanied while speaking, I will accompany them to speak.</li> <li>3. I am always friendly and greet my students without exception every day.</li> <li>4. I often forget my students' names, so I usually call them by saying you.</li> </ol>

TABLE II. TABLE I, CONT.

No	Indicators	Operational Definitions of Variables	Question Items
6	The Sympathy Maxim	The concept of this maxim is to minimize antipathy between self and others and to maximize sympathy between self and others.	5. When students often come late, I won't say, "I don't like students who often come late." 6. When students often forget to do homework, I won't say, "I don't like students who are too lazy to do homework." 7. I always try to ask how my students are direct. 8. When my students seem to have a problem, I will ask what bothers them and try to give them solutions.

Based on the construct measurement instrument above, it can be seen that there are 24 question items elaborated from 6 politeness maxims. To obtain the readability of the developed measurement instrument, a readability test was performed in 30 teachers. There are two general indicators from the readability test, which are how the language is appropriate for the instrument and how feasible the presentation of the instrument is. The following is the table for more details:

TABLE III. READABILITY TEST ON THE INSTRUMENT

No	Scoring Items	Participants' Responses		
		SA	A	DA
1	<b>The Language Appropriateness of the Instrument</b>	%	%	%
	a. The language of the instrument can be understood easily.	93.33	6.67	0
	b. The terms are used appropriately and consistently.	90	10	0
	c. The statements in the instruments are not ambiguous.	90	10	0
2	<b>The Feasibility of the Instrument Presentation</b>	%	%	%
	a. The instructions for filling in the instrument are clear.	96.66	3.34	0
	b. It is easy to fill in the instrument.	96.66	3.34	0
	c. The font type and size make the instrument easy to read.	96.66	3.34	0
<b>Explanation:</b> SA : Strongly agree, and no revision is necessary A : Agree, but some revisions are necessary. DA : Disagree, and revisions are mostly necessary.				

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the instrument that has been developed has good readability with 93.88% on average. However, there are some suggestions from the respondents to revise the instrument, especially regarding the use of language for several items of the instrument that cause ambiguity. For example, the statement "the utterance is not sympathetic." It is necessary to give the real example of an unsympathetic utterance so that it will not cause ambiguity and can be understood easily by the respondents. More suggestions were made regarding the inconsistent use of terms. For instance, there were some items of the instrument using the word *bertengkar* "to quarrel," but the other items used the word *berkelahi* "to fight." Another example is the use of words *pekerjaan rumah* "homework" and *tugas rumah* "home assignment." Therefore, based on the suggestions from the respondents, those terms should be used more consistently.

**B. Test Validity of the Instrument**

After the instrument was revised in accordance with the suggestions from the respondents in the readability test, test validity and reliability on the instrument were performed.

The following are the results of the test validity of each statement item of the instrument.

TABLE IV. TEST VALIDITY ON THE ITEMS OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Item Number	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Explanation
1	.560	.913	Valid
2	.639	.913	Valid
3	.456	.914	Valid
4	.414	.915	Valid
5	.661	.912	Valid
6	.524	.913	Valid
7	.526	.913	Valid
8	.594	.912	Valid
9	.740	.909	Valid
10	.501	.913	Valid
11	.586	.912	Valid
12	.288	.917	Valid
13	.534	.913	Valid
14	.635	.911	Valid
15	.754	.909	Valid
16	.590	.912	Valid
17	.712	.910	Valid
18	.485	.914	Valid
19	.626	.911	Valid
20	.282	.917	Valid
21	.538	.913	Valid
22	.272	.918	Valid
23	.507	.914	Valid
24	.573	.912	Valid

The validity level of the instrument items is obtained from the items' *Corrected Item-Total Correlation* values. If the value is  $\geq 0.25$ , the item is considered valid. However, if the value is  $< 0.25$ , the item is considered invalid and needs to be revised [17]. Based on the table above, it can be seen that all the items of the instrument have *Corrected Item-Total Correlation* value  $> 0.25$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that all items are valid and feasible to use.

**C. Test Reliability**

Besides the validity level, the results of the test reliability are also obtained. The following is for more details.

TABLE V. RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.916	.919	24

Raisch [16] explained that if the alpha value is  $> 0.7$ , the reliability is sufficient, but if the alpha value is  $> 0.8$ , all reliability items and all the tests are consistent internally because they have strong reliability. Based on the data in

Table 5, it can be seen that the *Cronbach's alpha* value is 0.916 which means that all items of the instrument have high-reliability value. Based on the results of the research, it is apparent that the developed instrument of politeness in language use has fulfilled the standards of a research instrument viewed from the content validity, construct validity, and reliability value. The instrument testing was conducted on elementary school teachers; hence this instrument will be more valid to be used to measure the politeness in the language used by elementary school teachers. It is necessary to develop the instrument when used to measure the politeness of language used by high school teachers because there will definitely be context differences between elementary school teachers and high school teachers.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that the developed instrument of politeness in the language used by teachers consists of 6 maxims of politeness, namely the modesty maxim, the agreement maxim, the generosity maxim, the sympathy maxim, the approbation maxim, and the tact maxim. The six maxims of politeness are predicted to be able to measure the level of the teachers' politeness during the learning process. This is evident from the results of instrument testing showing that the instrument has met the validity standards, both content validity and constructed validity. Additionally, the developed instrument has also met the reliability standards.

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