

The Forms of Politeness Applied by English Students in Communication to Their Thesis Advisor Lecturers Via WhatsApp

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the forms, scales, and factors of students' politeness in communication to their thesis advisor lecturers via WhatsApp. The research design was descriptive qualitative research. The subject of this research was 54 of 2017 English students' text messages to their thesis advisor lecturers who were selected from classes A, B, and C by using the purposive sampling technique. The data were analyzed based on theory forms of politeness by Kushartanti, scales of politeness by Leech, and factors affecting politeness by Brown & Levinson's theories. From the findings of this study, there are four forms of politeness used by students, namely pronominal sentences, indirect sentences, opening sentences, and word appreciation sentences. The most widely used forms of politeness are opening sentences and appreciation words. Five politeness scales were also found, namely the cost and benefit scale, the optionality scale, the indirectness scale, the authority scale, and the last is social distance scale, where this scale is the most widely used. All politeness data are influenced by relative power and social distance, and there is no size of imposition politeness factor found. There are also two forms of impoliteness in this study, directness and without using the word appreciation and some students are classified as impolite based on the optionality scale. Students use all existing forms of politeness because they use Indonesian politeness forms and Indonesian culture, which considers these forms a sign that sentences in a conversation are considered polite. The form of politeness used by students is influenced by the politeness scale, that is social distance and vice versa. Based on the result, it can be concluded that most of the students have used politeness form when communicating with their lecturers through WhatsApp text messages.

Keywords: politeness; forms; scales; factors of politeness; whatsapp

Introduction

Language is an important thing in human life. Language is a media or tool for human to communication with others to share their idea, opinion, and emotions. As Edward Finegan (2005: 5) says that Language is often viewed as a vehicle of thought, a system of expression that mediates the transfer of thought from one person to another. Communication is a way where somebody or some people in society created or used the information that connected to the environment or others. Communication is a social process in which individuals employ symbols to establish and interpret meaning in their environment (West, R. & Turner, Lynn H. 2010:5).

Communication aims to share knowledge or experience through spoken language, written, movement, and broadcasting. In communication, people must notice the attitude to avoid misunderstanding between the speaker and the listener. The attitude is what is commonly called politeness. According to Leech (2014: 51), when people try to be polite, they want to minimize the rude and unpleasant feelings of a conversation between a speaker and a listener.

The forms or ways of politeness is influenced by the culture in which politeness is used. Every culture has politeness that represents how the culture in their area is. That statement is supported by the opinion of Gao, Zhou, and Liu (2020) politeness is closely related to culture. Kamehkhosh, N and Larina, T (2020) also state that "Politeness is a culturally constructed concept." Different countries or different places also the form of politeness used. Leech (1983:104) defines politeness as those forms of behaviour that are aimed at the establishment and maintenance of comity, i.e, the ability of participants to engage in interaction in a comfortable and harmonious atmosphere. Linguistic politeness encompasses all forms of linguistic behaviour that are used to form and maintain relationships. The Forms of politeness, according to the theory of Kushartanti, Yuwono, and Lauder (2007: 105), can be expressed in various ways, including the following: pronominal, opening, indirect, and appreciation words.

We can determine whether someone is polite or not from the scale of politeness. Klegr (2016) uncovers that there are a few scales to decide if an expression can be determined as pleasant or not founded on Leech theory: cost-benefit scale, Optionality scale, indirectness scale, authority scale and social distance scale. In choosing the use of politeness sentences, there are many factors behind it. There are also many theories regarding this factor. One of the theories regarding the factor

influencing politeness is the theory of Brown and Levinson (1978:74), while the factors are as follows: Social distance, relative power and size of impositions.

The use of politeness can be conditioned or adapted to who, when, where, and how the conversation occurs. Politeness can be found orally and in writing, as Myers (1989:2) argues that politeness could be used in written communication to ensure smooth communication between readers and writers. The phenomenon of politeness occurs in all areas of human life. In education, politeness is found in communication between students and their lecturers during the teaching and learning process.

Nowadays, communication technology is developing rapidly coupled with a situation where face-to-face activities are reduced to reduce the number of positive cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia. This has an impact on limiting the implementation of direct teaching and learning activities. This has also led to an increase in the use of online communication. WhatsApp became one of the media that the lecturers and the students used to discuss lessons and information. This application helps the smooth teaching and learning process by directly replacing the inhibition of the teaching and learning process. As Minshew (2015) said, Integrated WhatsApp into teacher education courses can allow a varied group of interested individuals to participate in content creation and development and gather online to share knowledge, information, materials, and opinions. Students must exercise caution when communicating online, mainly via text, because the recipient of the message may read the reader with a different intonation, or the intention that the student wishes to convey is not adequately represented by the lecturer who receives the messages. Pratama (2020) states that "What people assume about our intentions and what we assume about other people's intentions are not always true". Therefore, students must avoid words that can cause misunderstandings.

There are several studies that previous researchers have carried out. The first is Santoso's (2013) research which examines the forms, factors, strategies, and politeness scales used through short message services (SMS). The second study, Wibowo (2018), analyzes the use of politeness strategies and the factors that influence these strategies by the main character, namely Bruce Wayne, in the Batman Begins movie. The next researcher is Dukha (2020), who examines politeness strategies by examiners and finds out the factors of using these strategies. The latest research, namely Alim et al. (2020),

examined the maxim deviation and politeness scale used in the Uang Panai Mahar film.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers wants to know whether students use politeness forms in communicating via WhatsApp messages with their supervisors, how the politeness scale is used and what factors influence their politeness. Therefore, the researchers conducted a study entitled "The Forms Of Politeness Applied By English Students In Communication To Their Thesis Advisor Lecturers Via Whatsapp." The reseach questions of this study were: 1) What forms of politeness do students have in communicating with their thesis advisor lecturers via Whatsapp? 2) What scales of politeness do students have in communicating to their thesis advisor lecturers via Whatsapp? 3) What factors influence the choice of politeness used by students in communicating to their thesis advisor lecturers via Whatsapp?.

Research Methodology

This research applied descriptive qualitative research because this research only consisted of text messages to show how a person used Politeness in the actual situation. Qualitative research seeks to make sense of and understand the language learning and language use of an individual or a group of individuals in natural (Phakiti, A. 2014:8). The subjects of this study were 54 students of the English Department of Bengkulu University class of 2017 from class A, B and C, who have done thesis guidance with their thesis supervisor. The researchers took the subject by using purposive sampling.

The researchers used document as the sources of data. The document was text messages from Whatsapp. The data were categorized based on Politeness form, Scales of politeness and factor affecting politeness. The supporting instruments used in conducting this research is table checklist of politeness. The researchers adapted a table checklist based on Febtrina (2019) to find the politeness used by students in the text of WhatsApp messages to their thesis advisor lecturers. In the process of this research, the researchers used documentation technique. The researchers also employed discourse analysis as a technique for doing qualitative research. Discourse analysis refers to a type of data analysis that can inform a writer about the discursive production of phenomena by analyzing text or utterances within a certain socio-cultural context (Willig, 2013). The researchers interpreted the result pragmatically to

explore students' politeness form in Whatsapp text messages to their thesis advisor lecturers.

In analyzing the data, the researcher adapted the theory from Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2012: 468), namely reading/memoing, describing and classifying. The researchers started analyzing the data by reading the text messages between students and lecturers that had been obtained. After that, the researchers made notes/memo about words or sentences included in the form of politeness, politeness scale, and the factors that affect politeness and impoliteness. Furthermore, explained the meaning of words or sentences that have been memorized. Then, the researchers also explains the reasons or things that strengthen the evidence that the word or sentence is included in one of the theories of politeness forms, politeness scale, factors that affect politeness and impoliteness. Finally, the researchers classified the sentences included in the types of politeness forms, scales, and factors using a checklist table.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The findings of this data relate to the forms of politeness used by English students in communication to their thesis advisor lecturers via WhatsApp. Based on the research, the researchers found forms of politeness by adopting Kushartanti's theory and politeness scale from Leech theory explained by Klerg, and the theory of the factors that influence the use of politeness by Brown and Levinson. Based on the explanation above, the researchers made a table that showed the form and scale of students' politeness in communicating with their thesis advisor lecturers. And also a description of the factors that affect politeness.

1. Forms of politeness

Table 4.1 Result of Politeness Forms by English Students

No	Forms of Politeness	Total
1.	Opener	164
2.	Appreciation Words	159
3.	Pronominal	80
4.	Indirect	68

From the table above, it can be seen that the messages conveyed by students to their supervisors use all types of politeness based on Kushartanti's theory. Based on table 1 data, the form of politeness can be explained as follows; There are 164 sentences included in the opening. These results indicate that students use the most opening words in WhatsApp messages with their thesis advisor lecturers. There are 159 sentences included in the Word Appreciation. It shows that appreciation words is the second most common form used by students. There are 80 sentences that included in indirect sentences. This data shows that the use of indirect is the second least form used by students. There are 68 sentences that are included in pronominal. It shows that pronominal is the form that students most minor use. The following is a detailed explanation of students' politeness in communicating with their thesis advisor lecturers:

1. Opener

Before conveying the real meaning in a conversation or communication, the use of opener words is also considered a politeness marker. The opening itself has various ways of delivery, including greetings, apologies/regrets and so on.

Example:

Data 1 a:

"Assalamualaikum mam."

From the data, The Word "Assalamualaikum" is one form of politeness in the type of greetings, Especially for Muslims. The word itself has the same meaning as "Peace Be Upon You". The use of the word greeting to start a conversation is considered polite.

2. Appreciation words

Giving appreciation to the speaker's partner said in a conversation is considered polite.

Example:

Data 33 d :

"Terima kasih sebelumnya, mam." ("Thank you in advance, mam.")

Saying thank you to the speech partner is also a form of politeness. These appreciation words are used because the speaker is grateful to the listener for taking the time and attention to the speaker.

3. Indirect

In a conversation, the disclosure of something indirectly is a form of politeness. The more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it is considered.

Example:

Data 45 e:

"Basically, I have finished consult with my Supervisor (P.U)."

The speaker does not directly tell the speaker's primary intention in this data. The speaker explains in advance that the speaker has finished conducting guidance with the speaker's Supervisor (PU) before conveying that the speaker wants to do advice and arranges the guidance schedule with the lecturer.

4. Pronominal

According to Kushartanti, the use of certain pronouns in a conversation is a sign of politeness. Usually to respect the interlocutor, the use of the word "saya" is considered more polite than using the word "aku".

Example:

Data 24 d:

"Jadi apakah saya bisa menemui Bapak untuk bimbingan?" ("So can I see you for guidance, Sir?").

The use of the word "Saya" in the above utterance is a form of using pronouns that are considered polite in Indonesian.

2. Scales of politeness

Table 4.2 Result of Politeness Scales by English Students

No	Scales of Politeness	Total
1.	Social Distance Scale	258
2.	Indirectness Scale	167
3.	Optionality Scale	35
4.	Indirectness Scale	25
5.	Authority Scale	17

The results of the table above show that the messages sent by students to their supervisors use all types of politeness scales based on Leech's theory described in Klerg. Based on the data in table 2, the politeness scale there are 258 utterances were categorized into the social distance scale, 167 utterances that fall into the indirectness scale category, 35 data that can be categorized on an optional scale, 25 data are

included in the cost-benefit scale category, 17 utterances which are categorized into the authority scale. From the data, it can also be seen that the Authority Scale is the minor scale contained in the data. On the contrary, the social distance scale is the dominant scale in the data. The more detailed explanation of the politeness scale is as follows:

1. Social Distance Scale

The social distance scale is one of the measuring tools that can determine whether or not a speech is polite or not applied by speakers based on their social distance.

Example:

Data 33 d:

*"Terima kasih sebelumnya, **mam**" ("Thank you in advance, mam")*

From some of the data above, using the words "Ma'am, mam", using the greeting word aims to respect the speaker partner. Thus, data that uses the greeting word in a speech to lecturers means that the data has fulfilled the social distance scale and student speech also indicates that students and lecturers have social distance.

2. Indirectness Scale

The indirectness scale is one of the measuring tools that determine politeness or not and the direct or indirect meaning of an utterance.

Data 8 a & b:

"Assalamu'alaikum wr wb" (Peace be upon you, and Allah's mercy and blessing) & "Selamat pagi, sir." ("Good morning, Sir")

The student first said greetings before conveying the student's intention to send a text message to his lecturer.

3. Optionality Scale

The more the speech allows the speaker and listener to make more and more choices, the more polite the utterance will be and vice versa.

Data 26 o:

"Apa sir bisa bimbingan tatap muka atau bimbingan online saja ya sir?" ("Sir, could the guidance is face-to-face or online guidance, sir?")

The statement illustrates that students give a top choice to the lecturer to determine the guidance method of conducting the advice itself. The existence of a choice scale aims to reduce coercion on lecturers. With a

choice, it shows that students give lecturers the freedom to choose without pressure.

4. Cost Benefit Scale

The cost-benefit scale is one of the scales that is used as a measuring tool to determine whether or not a person's speech is polite or not.

Data 13 f:

"Izin bertanya kembali sir, kira-kira kapan sir ada waktu agar saya bisa menemui sir untuk bimbingan?"

The questions asked by students illustrate that students give freedom to lecturers to determine the guidance schedule. Students as speakers must accept and follow the guidance schedule that the lecturer has determined. Thus, the student's speech meets the profit scale with the student's efforts to minimize their benefit and maximize their loss.

5. Authority Scale

The authority scale is one of the measuring tools that can determine whether or not politeness is based on social status. The farther the social distance, the more polite.

Data 2 b:

"Silvi izin mengirimkan revisian dari hasil ujian seminar proposal kemarin sir"

The statement above proves that lecturers have a higher social status than students. So it can be seen that students need permission from the lecturer to send files, get guidance or ask for advice from the lecturer.

3. Factors affecting politeness

Table 4.3 Result of Factors affecting Politeness by English Students

No	Scales of Politeness	Total
1.	Social Distance	54
2.	Relative Power	50
3.	Size of Imposition	0

The table 4.3. Shows that there are 54 data categorized as social distance factors and 50 data categorized as relative power. And also, no data is categorized into the size of imposition. Social distance is the most factors that

affecting students politeness in communication with their supervisor. As for a more detailed explanation of this, as follows:

1. Social distance

This factor is motivated by differences in social distance from related individuals such as age, gender, or proximity of the speaker to the listener.

Data 24:

*"Alhamdulillah **saya** sudah di acc sama penguji tentang revisi seminar hasil saya **pak**."*

*("Alhamdulillah, I have been approved by the examiner regarding the revision of my seminar results, **sir**.")*

The words "Saya" and "pak" indicate that there is the social distance between students and lecturers. The social distance itself can also be related to age or multicultural background.

2. Relative Power

Relative power is one factor that influences the selection of politeness, which is motivated by differences in the level of strength or control of a person.

Data 35:

*"Saya merupakan salah satu **mahasiswa bimbingan mam**."*

("I am one of mam's guidance students.")

Based on the data above, the use of the words "mahasiswa bimbingan" can be categorized into a relative power factor because the utterance indicates that the level of power of the speech partner, namely the supervisor, is higher than the speaker who is only a student. This factor is the background of students in using politeness forms when communicating with their lecturers.

3. Size of Imposition

There is no size of imposition found in the existing data. This is because the situation in the data is not urgent.

Discussion

The discussion about politeness itself is very broad. Politeness is not only seen in words but also in one's behavior. Politeness actually depends on the situation and conditions. Politeness in everyday life is not pegged to a form. In an informal situation a sentence can be considered polite but in a formal situation the sentence can be considered impolite. For example, not interrupting when other people are talking is included in a polite attitude. Making eye contact while speaking in some cultures is also included in politeness. In Indonesia, slightly bowed when walking in front of other people, especially the elderly. In Korea, also consider doing a bow including a form of politeness. But in the discussion of this thesis, the researchers focuses on the written politeness that students do when communicating online with their thesis supervisor.

There were many theories regarding the form of politeness. In this study, the researchers used Kushartanti's theory of politeness, which explains that the sign of a conversation containing the form of politeness is the presence of pronominal, indirect sentences, opener sentences, and Appreciation words. All forms of politeness based on Kushartanti's theory were also found in the data studied. However, some students did not use all of these forms in a single Whatsapp text message sent to their supervisor. The study results show that only two forms are primarily used by these students, namely openers and appreciation words. The most students used opener sentences, such as greetings, apologies, and self-introductions. Only one data does not use an opener in its text message because the data provided is only part of the whole conversation. The use of politeness forms in the form of an opener in greetings such as Assalamualaikum or good morning/afternoon is used by most students due to culture or habits, especially in Indonesia where the use of greetings before starting a conversation is considered a courtesy. Not only in Indonesia, based on research by rash Felicity. (2004) found that the use of greeting rituals for Switzerland is a vital aspect in communicating and is considered a form of politeness. The second most used form is Appreciation words. Most of the appreciation words used by students are thank you. The word appreciation such as "Thank you" is deemed polite because the use of that word aims to appreciate the listener. After all, the speakers has spent the speaker's partner time, mind, and energy.

The politeness scale is used to determine whether a person's speech is polite or not. Based on Leech's theory in Klegr (2016), there are five politeness scales: Cost-benefit scale, Optionality scale, Indirectness scale, Authority scale, and social distance scale. In this study, all politeness scales were used. The social distance scale

was the most common scale in the analyzed data. This scale shows that many students use polite language in conditions where the speakers in this study as students have an extended social distance from their speech partners, who are their thesis supervisors.

The results of this research are different from previous research where Santoso (2014) only found a cost-benefit, optional, and indirectness scale in his study. In his study, it was found that the most cost-benefit-based politeness scale. This scale shows a person's politeness based on the cost-benefit of the speaker. The greater the advantage of the speaker, the more disrespectful he is and vice versa. The results of this previous study did not really support the results of this study which can be seen from the differences in the results obtained. This difference is because, in previous studies, previous researchers did not examine the comprehensive data that had been received. For example, in a previous study, Santoso did not categorize the word "Pak" into a social distance scale, even though in this theory, the greeting can show that the speaker has a social distance far from the listener.

The result of another previous study is the study of Alim, Pujianti, Attas, and Leiliyanti (2020) which found only four scales on the data that had been analyzed. The scale that was not found in Alim's research is the Authority scale because the film's setting has almost the same social status. This is very different from the study of researchers where students' speakers have lower social status or authority than their speech partners who are lecturers of speakers.

In this study, students who used opening sentences and words of appreciation were also influenced by the social distance scale and vice versa. The farther a person's social distance is, the more polite that person will be. The social distance that is far adrift between students and lecturers causes students to use forms of politeness to respect or respect their interlocutor, that is, their lecturer. The form of politeness used is also motivated by their culture where before starting a conversation, they must say greetings which are the opening and closing sentences which are included in the word appreciation.

From the many theories in determining the factors causing the selection of politeness, the researchers in this study used the theory of Brown and Levinson (1979), which categorizes the factors into 3, namely Relative power, Social Distance, and Size of Imposition. In this study, only two factors were found behind the choice of politeness, namely relative power and social distance. At the same time, the most

common factor is social distance, namely the use of politeness caused by the social distance between the speaker and the listener. As for social distance in terms of age, in an environment, the speaker assumes that one must speak politely with the interlocutor whose age is above the speaker's age. While on the relative power factor, the use of politeness by students is motivated by differences in power where the listener, namely his superior, has higher power than speakers who are only students.

In a previous study by Dukha (2020), which analyzed the Factor that influences the use of politeness strategy by the examiners on students' thesis proposal online examination. From the study, Dukha found that the examiner had three factors that influenced politeness, namely payoff, relative power, and social distance. Of the three factors, the payoff factor is the most commonly found factor by purpose to avoid and minimize the FTA of the student and build a good relation.

The results of previous studies have differences and few similarities with this study. Wherein this study, there is no payoff factor because these factors are used to find out the reasons for using politeness strategies. In contrast, in this study, researchers want to know the factors that influence politeness forms. When viewed from the similarities, previous research and this study did not find a size of imposition factor because the situation or condition of the speaker and the speech partner was not in an emergency.

Not only politeness, impoliteness also found in this study. Impoliteness is negative behaviour that can cause discomfort, misunderstanding, and disharmony in social relationships. The Impoliteness that found is students use direct sentences that give the impression of urging or forcing their lecturers to provide guidance.

In a previous study, Santoso, W. J. (2014) also found impoliteness in his research in the form of the absence of a prologue, expressing the intention directly, and the absence of a sentence of appreciation that should exist. These results have several similarities with this study, namely the absence of expressions of appreciation and direct delivery of intent. With the same situation, messages between students and their lecturers. In Indonesian culture, politeness is considered the basis of using the words sorry, please, and thank you.

In the study of Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2017) found that Greek Cypriot university students sent emails using directness, there was no opening and closing sentences, and the form of greeting was incorrect. The study results found that what the students did was considered impolite. Economidou's research has several

similarities with the researcher study, which has an Indonesian cultural background, that there are students who use directness and do not use closing sentences. The use of politeness in both studies was carried out in the same situation: the message that students would send to their lecturers; it was just a different platform where students in the Economidou study used email while this study used WhatsApp. These studies also have similarities in politeness form, namely opening sentences, indirect sentences, and words of appreciation which are also included in the closing sentences. Although different countries and cultures still found the same impoliteness used by students. But there are also different situations behind the impoliteness carried out by students in these two studies. In Economidou's research, students use forms of impoliteness because those who are non-native speakers are confused about having to prioritize cultural politeness norms or target language politeness norms. In this study, students used their native language, and some did not follow their cultural norms.

There is also some impoliteness found in this study when viewed from the scale because on this scale, the fewer choices given to the listener, the more considered impolite. The impoliteness found was that some students did not provide their lecturer with many options in choosing the guidance time. Students limit the tutoring time selected by the lecturer by using the words "today" or "tomorrow." However, students still give freedom to the lecturer to answer yes or no to the question, but if the student arranges the day before lecturer said can be considered rude.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

In this study, most English students in communicating with their thesis supervisors use all forms of politeness. The most used forms are opener sentences and appreciation words because students want to respect their speech partners, who are their supervisors. In addition, the cultural background also influences the use of politeness.

All scales can be found in the analyzed data if viewed in terms of the politeness scale. The social distance scale is the dominant scale that measures the politeness of speakers. The scale of politeness found affects the form of politeness used by students and vice versa.

There are only two factors that influence the use of politeness by students based on Brown and Levinson's theory, namely real power and social distance. The social distance between students and lecturers who are far adrift is the most common

politeness factor. In addition to politeness, it was also found some students used some impoliteness.

From this study, it can be concluded that most students have used politeness form when communicating with their thesis advisor lecturers.

Suggestion

The researchers suggested to readers or students to use forms of politeness when communicating so that the interaction goes well. Researchers also suggest providing knowledge about this politeness more widely and early as possible.

There are still many shortcomings that can be found due to limitations in obtaining more data. Therefore, the researchers hopes future researchers can conduct better research on forms of politeness, politeness scale, and factors that influence the use of politeness and in more detail about impoliteness or discuss over-politeness by expanding the subject of research on politeness so that more people who know about politeness and more and more people are using this form of politeness correctly.

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