

Language Politeness as a Foundation for Ethical and Moral Development Among Islamic Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The principles of politeness are fundamental to understanding ethical and moral behavior. This study explores the principles of politeness, as manifested in maxims, and the ethics and morals of students at Islamic Elementary School. The method used in providing data is the Listen method with *Dasar Sadap* techniques with *Simak, Bebas, Libat Cakap* (SBLC) technique. Data was obtained from 25 students' oral and written speech. The oral speech data was collected by dialogue using a recorder and transcript. Then, written speech data was taken from the transcript of the message. The research uses a pragmatic theoretical approach, especially the principles of language politeness (Leech, 1983). The data analyzed uses the collection method with *Bagi Unsur Langsung* (BUL) technique. This technique divided data directly into the theory, although the results of the research show that the language use of Nurul Islam students does not violate the principles of politeness. In that sense, students' speech is classified as using polite language, which is manifested in the form of (1) the maxim of wisdom (tact maxim), (2) maxim of generosity or generosity (generosity maxim), (3) maxim of acceptance or praise or appreciation (approbation maxim), (4) humility or simplicity maxim (5) agreement maxim, (6) sympathy maxim. These maxims shape student ethics and morals in the midst of rapidly increasing technological developments through the language conveyed in the interactions carried out. Thus, this research contains the politeness principle Islamic Elementary School Studets used. Social media do not influence the language used of politeness principle, although the research still has the potential to be studied in more depth regarding the principles of politeness from different perspectives and objects in rapid technological advancements.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has revolutionized communication by providing instant access to vast amounts of information. It is a tool that functions as a fast communication tool. Humans can access thousands of external information in a matter of seconds. Social media is the easiest access to information that is much

loved by society today, especially children. Thousands of teenagers use social media every day (Dhanya, 2016) as an information center. All forms of social media such as Ig, Twitter, FB, TikTok, Snack Video, and Telegram are the center of attention of today's young people, so they are able to change the way young people communicate via spoken and written language. (Warid, hodairiyah, & Lail, 2021) states that it is also a system of communication in speech and written by people of a particular country. Language is a means of communication between people to convey ideas, communicate, or exchange thoughts (Oviogun & Veerdee, 2020). Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication (Wardhaugh, in Ramelan, 1984, in (Clark & Brandt, 2024)). Language has changed dramatically with the advancement of technology and social media (Natsir, Aliah, Zulkhaeriyah, Amiruddin, & Esmianti, 2023), it is dynamic (Baronchelli, Loreto, & Tria, 2012). This means that language can change over time and the rapid flow of globalization. Thus, current language use tends to change. This change occurred in the use of very short messages and various forms of acronyms and emojis used by young people to convey messages both directly and indirectly. This is a striking linguistic shift that has an impact on the use of language in the communication system, such as the Gen Z students of Senior High School of Nurul Islam. The use of language in context will give birth to its own meaning in the interlocutor (Fitri, 2022).

The language used by students today is very diverse, both verbally and in writing. The use of language in the communication system reflects the character of the student himself. Good and polite language will reflect good behavior and vice versa. So, it does not rule out the possibility that students' current use of language is closely related to the meaning of their speech acts. Politeness strategies and principles are the main factors in forming good communication between speakers and interlocutors (Disastri & Isror Alfarobby, 2023). Politeness in language is characterized by a feeling of pleasure that a person has when listening to his interlocutor speak to avoid negative feelings in the interlocutor or listener (Brown & Levinson, 1989). In interacting, rules are needed that govern the speaker and interlocutor to establish later good communication between the two (Leech, 2014). Thus, many cases have been found on social media that have emerged regarding students' impoliteness in conveying messages to someone who should be respected. Current students can be categorized as students who are experiencing a moral crisis.

Therefore, the relationship between pragmatics, ethics, and morals is a very relevant study in this research to look at language politeness in Senior High School of Nurul Islam students, because students' language politeness is able to shape students' ethics and morals as seen from the form of messages conveyed through the language used. Both are interconnected to create a harmonious atmosphere between speakers and interlocutors. So it can be said that language politeness is a pragmatic study (Diani, 2014; Leech, 2014; Ryabova, 2015; in Simatupang & Naibaho, 2020). Pragmatic is concerned with meaning in relation to a speech situation where context stands as one among various aspects (Leech, 1983; in Indrawati, 2009). Meanwhile, ethics and morals are a form of rules in the form of actions and values in living a life with dignity. Ethics is a set of principles or values of right or wrong that are adhered to by society as a form of morals (Wiharto, 2007). Morals are a measure of a person's good and bad, both as a person, as a member of societies, and as a citizen (Febriyanti, 2021). These three aspects have a unidirectional coordination system to create acceptable communication between speakers and speech acts.

The previous studies by Hamidah (2017), Mislikhah (2014), Wayan Gunarthalai (2023), Tarmini (2018), Rahayu (2018), Lilik Kholisotin (2017), Yunus (2018), Mahmudi (2021), and Arifah & Azis (2023) have all focused on pragmatics, particularly language politeness, with a focus on cases in the media and student speech. These studies primarily examined the relationship between speech and education. However, the current research differs by applying Leech's pragmatic theory to analyze language politeness among elementary school students, specifically examining how it influences the ethical and moral development of Generation Z. While previous research has explored how language has evolved due to social media, there has been limited investigation into how these changes affect the ethical and

moral development of elementary school students. Leech's six principles of politeness provide a robust framework for analyzing the ethical implications of language use in this context.

Thus, this study aims to investigate how the principles of language politeness, as defined by Leech's theory (Leech, 1983), shape the ethics and morals of students as Gen Z at Islamic Elementary School. This research seeks to identify the types of politeness maxim used by students as Leech theory (Leech, 1983). The principles of politeness are divided into six maxims, namely (1) tact maxim, (2) generosity maxim, (3) acceptance or praise or appreciation maxim, (4) the maxim of humility or simplicity (5) the maxim of agreement or agreement (agreement maxim), (6) the maxim of sympathy (sympathy maxim). These maxims can shape the ethics and morals of Nurul Islam students. Leech's theory is a theory that is very relevant for looking at the forms or principles of language politeness used by Nurul Islam students as Islamic boarding school students who are still under the auspices of kiyais and the harshness of increasingly sophisticated technology is also able to influence students' way of communicating. Therefore, this study will explore about the types of principle politeness and ethical development among student of Islamic Elementary School, contributing to the boarder discourse in communication and morality.

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine and describe the types of language politeness principles among by Islamic Elementary School Students, and to explore how their language used reflects and shapes their ethics and morals. Therefore, a pragmatic theoretical approach, especially language politeness (Leech, 1983) is a very relevant theory for analyzing the use of politeness principles that shape elementary school students' ethics and morals which are applied to students' ethics and morals through their language used that applaied in sentence. The steps used in this research are language handling (Sudaryanto, 2015) which includes three stages, namely (1) providing data; (2) data analysis stage; and (3) the stage of presenting the results of data analysis.

The data source used in this research is student speech, both oral and written. The choice of data source was due to; First, students are the subjects most easily influenced by outside culture. Second, the language used by students is the language of Gen Z, in the sense that today's children's language is a language that is easily influenced by external languages (the influence of social media) so that it can cause a moral and ethical crisis for students within the Islamic boarding school. Third, students are children under the guidance of Islamic boarding schools led by kiyais or clerics who understand religion, are full of ethics and have good manners. The data in this research is in the form of sentences produced from the speech of Nurul Islam students which contain the principles of linguistic politeness.

Data was collected using the *Simak* method with *Dasar Sadap* techniques with *Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (SBLC) technique. The *Simak* Method is carried out by listening to language use that in the form of sentences contained the principles of linguistic politeness in the speech of Nurul Islam students. Next, the *Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (SBLC) technique is carried out as (Mahsun, 2017) by involving unobtrusive participation observation during conversation. It means that this technique is tapping interview techniques to obtain prospective data, as well as recording and classifying data in the form of lingual language units that contain elements of language politeness principles in accordance with the types of language politeness principles used by Nurul Islam students.

After the data is collected, the data will be analyzed using the collection method with *Bagi Unsur Langsung* (BUL) technique. This technique is a technique for dividing lingual units of language in the form of sentences. These sentences are divided or classified based on types of politeness principles (Leech, 1983) as the language in question (Sudaryanto, 2015). It means that this technique is divided the sentence which correlate with the types of politeness principles.

Finally, to present the results of data analysis, researchers used informal methods. The results of the analysis can be presented through sentences that form a single unit that is manifested in an article.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings on the use of linguistic politeness principles among Islamic Elementary School Students, both in oral and written communication. This research describes and explains the forms of language politeness principles according to (Leech, 1983). The principles of politeness found in the speech of Nurul Islam students are (1) maxim of wisdom (tact maxim), (2) maxim of generosity or generosity (gene-rosity maxim), (3) maxim of acceptance or praise or appreciation (appro-bation maxim), (4) humility or simplicity maxim (5) agreement maxim, (6) sympathy maxim. The maxim is the short statement related with their behaviour of Islamic Elementary School Students. It means it is explained and related to student ethics and morals. The description and explanation of the principles of politeness in the form of maxims are as follows;

3.1 Maxim of Wisdom (*tact maxim*)

This situation happened in the class when the teaching process runs. One of the students in 5th class of Elementary School does not understand with one of the tasks that is given. The teacher asks him to come in to his teacher in his room during break time.

Fair : *Pak, nika tugassa kaule karê sittung ghi' ta' lastarê, kaula ta' oning.*

(Sir, my task has left only one yet to complete my assignment, I don't know.

Mr Muhkam : *nomer berempa se ta' mare?*

(Which number is not finished yet?)

Fair : *nomer tello' sir.*

(number three, sir.)

Mr Muhkam : *ya dagghi' ka kantor jam istirahat, ebalana'na carana.*

(OK, you'll go to the office during break time, I'll tell you how.)

Fair : *Engghi, sir.*

(Yes, Sir)

The data above shows that there are utterances in the form of sentences delivered by a teacher that maximize benefits for a student. A teacher who is willing to provide more service to students who do not understand the tasks given. This is called the maxim of wisdom. The maxim of wisdom is a maxim that states that every speaker will adhere to the principle of always reducing one's own profits and maximizing the profits of others in speaking activities. People who speak and implement maxims of wisdom are said to be people who behave politely.

Like the speech made by the teacher and students in the conversation above. The conversation above is a form of maxim of wisdom which gives birth to polite behavior and shapes students' ethics and morals. This can be seen in a speech made by both parties without causing negative things such as arguments and students' impolite attitudes towards a teacher. A student's ethics can be seen from the way he speaks, which communicates his ignorance in his learning without using harsh sentences or words, so that the speech becomes speech that can be well received by the speaker and the interlocutor.

3.2 Maxim of generosity or generosity (*generosity maxim*)

This situation happened at boarding school. It is happened between students of junior high school and Elementary School. The student in elementary school cannot wash her clothes by herself. Every student is a newbie always with their senior to give knowledge and teach how to be an independent student in boarding school as the dialogue below:

D Student : *Za, Edimma Kalambina be'en? Mara esassa'a mun engko'.*

(Za, Where your clothes? Come on, I'll wash it.)

R Student : *dhina ta' usa mbak, esassa'a dibi' dagghi' sore.*

(No need, sis, I'll wash it myself later this afternoon.)

D Student : *bisa nyassa ongghu?*

(really, can you wash it?)

R Student : *Insyallah, Mbak.*

(God willing, sis.)

D Student : *ta' arapah, sateya engko' se nyassa'a. Jumat been ejarna nyassa mun engko'.*

(it's okay, now I'll just do the washing. Friday I will teach you to wash.)

R Student : *ya, nyaman, mbak.*

(nice)

The speech above is a realization of the maxim of generosity. This is demonstrated by a speech that adheres to the principle of reducing one's own benefits by adding sacrifices to oneself. This is done to honor or respect someone, as in the speech made by the boarding school children. The conversation between D and R as students and at the same time students from different classes in activities at the boarding school are roommates. D is the head of the room and R is a new member of the room as well as a new student who doesn't know how to wash clothes. D, as head of the boarding school, must provide good service to his younger siblings and teach them good washing procedures. D, as head of the hut, offered to wash R's clothes. From this story, it can be seen that D is trying to increase the burden on himself and reduce the benefits for himself. It is clear that D really maximizes the other party's profits.

The speech events above form students' ethics and morals, which can be seen in the speech between the two parties. This speech contains a positive impression as evidenced by polite language. The use of language by both parties between the speaker and the speech partner does not contain language that is hurtful or invites hostility. So, it can be said that the use of polite language is able to shape behavior and be able to be assessed well in front of other people as speech partners.

3.3 Maxim of acceptance or praise or appreciation (approbation maxim)

This situation happened in the class, and happened between student of sixth class and 5th class as OSIS. They held the drawing competition for a kinder garden, as the dialogue below;

A Student : *ninggue Gambarra.*

(coba sini lihat gambarnya)

(try to see the picture.)

RA student: *iye kak (sambi mukka' buku gambar).*

(here bro) (while opening the drawing book)

A Student : *Ma' bagus onghu ya, anghuy gradasi, tekniknya ya. Luar biasa. Penggunaan warna krayona teppa'.*

(It's really good, using gradations, the drawing technique is correct. Extraordinary. The use of crayon colors is also correct.)

From the conversation above, it can be seen that student A, as the student council president, really appreciates the winner's drawing. He responded with praise. This praise can be seen from the words of the student council chairman who said " *Ma' bagus onghu ya, anghuy gradasi, tekniknya ya. Luar biasa. Penggunaan warna krayona teppa'.*". The speech delivered by the student council president to one of the students taking part in the competition was considered polite when praising him. This can also be seen in RA's speech when he responded well to A's speech. The student council president's speech can be a motivation or can increase students' enthusiasm for creativity. Thus, it can be said that people who respond well to their speech partner's speech through praise can be said to be people who are able to realize politeness in speaking. As Leech's theory states, the maxim of praise can be realized if the speech delivered by the speaker and the speech partner contains values of mutual respect or appreciation. Speech that appreciates or respects other people will usually be expressed in the form of praise.

People who are polite in speaking can be seen in that person's behavior. A person's ethics and morals are reflected in the way he speaks. The use of good language is chosen by someone before the language is conveyed. A person is able to filter his language before delivering it, so that the language

spoken to the interlocutor can be filtered or chosen so as not to cause pain and to avoid offending someone when the interlocutor conveys his speech. Therefore, the use of language is very important for a person, because language is able to reflect a person's ethics and morals.

3.4 Maxim of humility or simplicity

This situation occurred in a 6th-grade classroom. The students were assigned tasks by their teacher, and among them was one particularly bright student who consistently excelled. She is known as the top student in the class and often wins first place in every competition, as reflected in the dialogue below:

Student L: *mara kerjaaghi no.3.*

(let's do no.3)

Student D: *Aiii, beremma mun sala? Polana Engko' ta' yakin.*

(mm, it's okay even if it's wrong? Because I'm not sure.)

Student L: *mara pas, pagghun teppak mun la ecapok been.*

(come on, it must be right if you do it.)

From the speech above, it can be seen that student D is humble and not arrogant by saying "aish, it's okay to be wrong? Because I am not sure." Student D's speech tried to reduce self-praise by saying that he was not sure about his work. In fact, these students are outstanding students and often win championships in several Olympiads. He was the overall champion in every competition he participated in. This does not rule out the possibility that the student will be able to do the questions given by the teacher well. This is in line with Leech's theory, which states that people who are humble and not arrogant in speaking will try not to praise themselves. A person who adheres to this principle is someone who has realized the principle of language politeness called the maxim of simplicity.

Someone who realizes the maxim of simplicity through politeness in language will reflect ethics and morals. This means that language is a person's way of determining their attitudes. A person's attitude can be seen in the ethics and morals that are realized in everyday life when speaking with his speech partner. Language is able to reflect a person's ethics and morals in every action. A person is said to be polite in his behavior if he is able to implement the principles of politeness in his use of language.

3.5 Maxim of compatibility or agreement (agreement maxim)

This situation is in the class of presentation student. This language is taken in one of their dialogue in presentation, the dialogue presentation as below;

FZ students: thank you for the time and opportunity you have given us. We apologize for delivering material that is still less than perfect to our group. Next, we hand it over to the moderator.

SA Student: OK, maybe there are things in the presentation material that need to be questioned? We invite.

Teacher : Thank you for the presentation, it was truly extraordinary.

From the speech above, it can be seen that the speech that occurs between students and teachers in presentation classes shows the value of politeness. This speech is also based on the value of politeness and respect from a teacher towards students who make presentations. This award is a form of praise for students. A thank you delivered by a teacher to a student is a form of appreciation in itself for a student who receives praise. So that this award upholds the principle of maximal compatibility or consensus. According to (Leech, 1983), the maxim of suitability or agreement is a maxim that requires the interlocutor to maximize his suitability in speaking.

Someone who agrees to communicate will create a very harmonious atmosphere or conditions for conversation. This is demonstrated by the use of language used by speakers and interlocutors when communicating. Good language will create good student ethics and morals. Students who behave well

will be reflected in the language used by the students. Therefore, the relationship between language, ethics and morals is a very complex thing to be realized in every life.

3.6 Sympathy Maxim

This situation took place between two students communicating via text on their mobile phones. The language exchange is detailed below:

EEM students: *engko' idzinaghi ta' maso'a.*

(allow me not to enter.)

Student A: *arapa?*

(Why?)

EEM student: *Tang mba tadha' omor.*

(my grand mom is died.)

Student A: *Innalillahi Wa Innaailaihi diligent. Condolences, yes. May his deeds and worship be accepted by Allah SWT, and may those left behind be given patience and an open heart.*

The speech above shows the politeness of EEMs and A, who interact in text. A's speech is a principle of sympathy because it shows sympathy or pity for EEM who is experiencing a disaster. Sympathetic speech is shown with "Innalillahi Wa Innaailaihi rajun. Condolences, yes. "May his deeds and worship be accepted by Allah SWT, and may those left behind be given patience and an open heart." According to (Leech, 1983) The maxim of sympathy requires that participants in speech can maximize the attitude of sympathy between one party and another.

A person who has empathy for other people will be seen from the speech the speaker conveys to his interlocutor through language. The language used by speakers when giving a form of sympathy can be seen from their use of language. Using good language will give a special impression to the person you are talking to because polite language will prove that the person has ethics and morals. Because a person who speaks politely is someone who is able to use good language. The language used does not contain negative things that cause the interlocutor to feel hurt or offended by the speech spoken by the speaker.

Discussion

This research identified six types of politeness maxims in the speech of Islamic elementary school students, which play a significant role in shaping their ethics and morals. According to Leech (1983), these maxims are the tact maxim, the generosity maxim, the approbation maxim, the modesty maxim, the agreement maxim, and the sympathy maxim. These principles are highly relevant to the speech patterns of Islamic boarding school students, particularly in the context of globalization and technological development. While globalization and technology have profoundly influenced the language use of Nurul Islam students, sometimes leading to negative effects like hurtful or awkward communication, this study found no violations of politeness principles based on Leech's theory. This contrasts with previous research by Claudia and Rakhmawati (2018), which focused on maxim violations in drama texts, indicating a different outcome in terms of findings. The current study, conducted by Septiani and Widjojoko (2022), is field research involving student subjects, ensuring that the data collected is objective and reflective of the current situation.

Each text in the research findings demonstrates a clear connection to the ethical and moral development of students. This is evident in the way students use language in their utterances, particularly in how they communicate with authority figures. Despite being at the elementary school level, these students already exhibit the ability to behave appropriately and selectively use polite language. They demonstrate an understanding of how to adapt their language when interacting with those in positions of authority. Consequently, the students' polite behavior aligns with the maxims outlined by Leech (1983).

This study is a direct investigation into how language is employed within students' communication systems, specifically focusing on the application of politeness principles. The behavior of students in selecting appropriate language when conversing with others is a key indicator of their adherence to these principles. The deliberate choice of respectful and polite language reflects a student's ethical standards. Ethics, as defined by Flora (2019), is the study of moral principles. It encompasses the moral values and norms that guide an individual's actions. Language, ethics, and morality are deeply intertwined, forming an inseparable system where each component influences the others. A person's behavior can often be understood through the language they use, which is filtered and selected by reason, leading to the use of polite language. As Yulita (2015) notes, humans are endowed with the ability to think, enabling them to choose language that adheres to politeness principles, particularly in educational settings.

In this context, the students of Nurul Islam have maintained a high level of politeness in their language use, despite the rapid evolution of language influenced by technological advancements. Their consistent use of polite language indicates their ability to control and reflect their ethics and morals through their speech. This suggests that the principles of politeness remain intact among these students, even in the face of external pressures from modern communication trends.

Further research on this topic could delve deeper into the nuances of language use, ethics, and morality among students from various perspectives or through alternative methodologies. Such investigations could lead to more advanced findings, contributing significantly to our understanding of the relationship between language and ethical behavior. Therefore, the choice of research sites and methodologies is crucial for uncovering deeper insights and identifying gaps for future studies.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the principles of politeness contained in students' speech, both oral and written, can shape the ethics and morals of elementary school students, which are manifested in six types of proverbs. In the use of language seen from the form of maxims there is no violation of the principles of politeness, so it can be said that students' use of language is polite and does not give a negative impression to other parties so that the conversation occurs in harmony. The use of language by elementary school students can be seen from the students' behavior, and the choice of language used is also a separate control for students when speaking. Therefore, language, ethics, and morals become a unified system adopted by students when speaking. Thus, the study of politeness principles still has the potential to be studied in more depth, especially on different objects. So it becomes an opportunity for future researchers to study the principles of politeness from other points of view in order to find new linguistic forms of politeness principles from different points of view.

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