

Politeness of Students' Short Message (SMS) to Lecturers: Pragmatic Approach

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Abstract:

In academic communication, politeness in short messages (SMS) from students to lecturers is an important aspect that reflects respect and language ethics. From a pragmatic perspective, politeness in messages is not only determined by the choice of polite words, but also by understanding the context, language function, and prevailing social norms. Based on pragmatic principles, the messages conveyed by students must pay attention to factors such as social status, the relationship between speakers and interlocutors, and the purpose of communication. For example, opening greetings, polite request expressions, and polite closings show awareness of politeness in communication. Conversely, messages that are too direct, without self-introduction, or use informal language can be perceived as lacking respect for academic norms.

Keywords: Politeness, Students' Short Message (SMS), Lecturers, Pragmatic Approach

Introduction

One of the communication facilities available on smartphones is text messaging. This facility allows users to send and receive messages instantly. At the beginning of its appearance, smartphones only had one text messaging facility, namely Short Message Service (SMS). SMS is a short message service that uses cellular networks and is often charged per message. However, along with the development of technology and the internet, many text messaging applications can now be downloaded for free and offer more diverse features.

The most widely used text messaging application today is WhatsApp (WA). WA is an instant messaging application that can be easily downloaded through the Play Store for Android users or the App Store for iPhone users.

This application has become one of the most popular because it offers convenience in communication. Unlike SMS which relies on credit, WhatsApp utilizes an internet connection, either through WiFi or data packages, so users can send messages without being charged per message.

Apart from sending text messages, WhatsApp also has various other interesting features, such as sending images, videos, documents, voice messages, and voice and video calls. WA also has a group feature that allows communication within a community or group to be easier. With a simple and user-friendly interface, WhatsApp has become one of the favorite messaging applications for various groups, both for personal and professional purposes.

However, the ease of communicating through WhatsApp (WA) does not mean that there are no obstacles. One of the problems that needs serious attention is the form and style of language used in text messages. Many users, especially the younger generation, tend to ignore aspects of language politeness when communicating via smartphones. This can have an impact on the quality of communication and relationships between individuals.

The phenomenon of language politeness violation is now increasingly common, including in the academic world. One example is text messages sent by students to their lecturers. Many students do not pay attention to the principles of politeness in composing text messages, such as using language that is too casual, not starting with a greeting, or even not including their identity. Good and polite communication is needed in the world of education to reflect respect and build healthy academic relationships between students and lecturers.

Language politeness is one of the important rules in communication, both verbally and nonverbally. In oral communication, intonation and facial

expressions can help convey intent more clearly. However, in written language, every word used can have a different meaning for the reader. Therefore, WhatsApp users need to be more careful in composing messages to remain polite, and clear, and not cause misunderstandings in communication. This is included in the study of Pragmatics.

Pragmatic is the study of the aspect of meaning and language use that is dependent on the speaker, the addressee, and the other features of the context of utterance. Kurniatin (2017) states that pragmatics deals with the study of the ability of natural language speaking to communicate more than one language that which is explicitly stated. In the philosophy of language, a natural language sometimes called ordinary language is a language that is spoken, written, or signed by human beings for the general purpose of communication.

Pragmatics is concerned with the application of the description of meaning. It is the study of language that emphasizes interaction sociolinguistics, which combines the conversation, with a pragmatic approach, studying socio interaction, and assigning significance to context, functions, and social norms, conventions, and principles.

Politeness is one of the important aspects of pragmatics. Pragmatics itself is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in the context of its use. As a relatively new discipline, pragmatics focuses on how the meaning of an utterance is understood not only based on its language structure but also the accompanying situation and context of communication.

According to Thomas (In Shalihah and Zuhdi, 2020), pragmatics can be defined as meaning in use or meaning in context. This means that an utterance or message is not only understood from the words used, but also

from the manner, place, and situation in which the communication takes place. Therefore, the aspect of politeness in language becomes an important part of pragmatics, because politeness determines how a message can be received properly by the interlocutor.

In everyday life, language politeness plays an important role in maintaining harmonious social relationships. Someone who understands the principle of politeness in pragmatics will be better able to adjust their communication style according to the context and the interlocutor. Thus, politeness not only reflects communication ethics but also helps to create more effective and respectful interactions.

Review of Literature

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is concerned with the application of descriptions of meaning in communication. It is a branch of language study that emphasizes the sociolinguistic aspects of interaction, where meaning depends not only on language structure but also on social and cultural context. Pragmatics studies how individuals use language in conversation to achieve specific communication goals, understand hidden intentions, and conform to prevailing social norms and conventions.

With a pragmatic approach, this study explores various aspects of social interaction, such as language use in various situations, communication functions, as well as principles of politeness and cooperation in conversation. Through this approach, one can understand how meaning is formed and understood based on context, including the relationship between speakers and

listeners. Therefore, pragmatics plays an important role in understanding the dynamics of everyday communication and the effectiveness of message delivery in various social situations.

Norma (in Eliza, 2023) explains the pragmatic approach is a method that can be used as a tool to achieve learning objectives, especially in the context of English language learning. This approach emphasizes the functional and practical aspects of language, which allows learners to use English in real situations according to their communicative needs. With this approach, learning does not only focus on theory or grammar rules, but also on the application of language in everyday life, so that learners can more easily understand, remember, and use it effectively.

In addition, the pragmatic approach provides flexibility in the learning process, as it can be adapted to the needs and goals of learners. For example, in English language learning, this approach allows students to practice speaking, writing, reading and listening skills in various relevant contexts, such as in daily conversations, the world of work or academic situations. Thus, learners can be more confident in using English naturally and communicatively. Therefore, the pragmatic approach is considered as one of the effective approaches in the learning process, because it is able to improve learners' understanding, skills, and motivation in learning English.

Politeness

Politeness is one of the important aspects of pragmatics. Pragmatics itself is a relatively new branch of linguistics that focuses on how the meaning of an utterance is understood in the context of its use. In his book, Thomas (in Shahilah and Zuhdi, 2020) defines pragmatics as meaning in use or

meaning in context. This shows that the meaning of an utterance depends not only on the structure of the language but also on the accompanying communication situation.

In addition, the book explains that the use of politeness in language is influenced by various external contexts. One of the main factors in the external context of politeness is the social status of participants in communication. Grundy (in Shahilah and Zuhdi, 2020) adds that three main factors determine politeness strategies, namely distance, power, and coercion. Distance is related to the evaluation of one's position in society, the level of familiarity, and solidarity with the interlocutor. Power is evaluated based on various factors such as position, social status, and age difference between the speaker and the listener. Meanwhile, coercion includes any action that can threaten one's autonomy and freedom of action. Therefore, understanding politeness in language is very important to create effective and harmonious communication in accordance with the prevailing social context.

Method

Qualitative research is a research method used to explore and understand the meaning constructed by individuals or groups on a social phenomenon or human problem. This method focuses on an in-depth understanding of the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of participants in a particular context (Creswell in Eliza, 2023). This approach usually involves data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and analysis of relevant documents or artifacts. Thus, qualitative research not only explores facts but also understands how individuals give meaning to their experiences.

In addition, this research is flexible and not tied to quantitative measurements, allowing researchers to adjust the approach according to the dynamics that arise in the field. The results of qualitative research are usually descriptive and interpretive, provide richer insights into complex social realities, and help understand patterns of human interaction and behavior in various situations (Umarova, 2023).

Results and Discussions

As described in the previous section, the data used in this paper is SMS sent by students to lecturers. In this paper, the author discusses the politeness strategies used by students in writing the SMS.

a. Bald-on Record Strategy

Example :

x: "Save no saya yang baru ini ya"

y: "Hari ini ada kuliah nggak pak?"

In quotations (x) and (y), the SMS writer does not make any effort to minimize threats to the face of the interlocutor or to reduce the consequences of actions that threaten the face (FTA). Such a strategy will make the other person feel surprised or uncomfortable. This kind of SMS is considered impolite because the status of the SMS writer (speaker) is a student who should have used a certain strategy to make his speech polite. After all, the SMS recipient (speaker) is the lecturer.

z: *"Bu hari ini saya mau bimbingan. Balas!"*

Similar to examples (x) and (y) above, in example (z), the SMS writer does not consider who the interlocutor is. The SMS writer makes every effort to minimize threats to the face of the interlocutor or to reduce the consequences of actions that threaten the face (FTA). Such a strategy will make the other person feel surprised or uncomfortable (Hidayani, S., Silfiani, A.N., & Razali, 2023). This kind of SMS is considered impolite because the status of the SMS writer (speaker) is a student who should have used a certain strategy to make his speech polite. After all, the SMS recipient (speaker) is the lecturer. The word "Reply" above conveys the impression that the SMS writer forces the SMS recipient to reply to his SMS.

b. Positive Politeness Strategy

Example :

"Selamat pagi pak, mohon maaf mengganggu waktunya. Sebelumnya saya SH (21087645) selaku PJMK kelas 6B prodi Bahasa Inggris ingin menyampaikan pagi ini jam 3-4 ada jam bapak. Terimakasih"

In the example above, the SMS writer has made efforts to minimize threats to the face of the interlocutor or to reduce the consequences of face-threatening actions (FTA). Such a strategy can make the interlocutor feel valued and respected. This kind of SMS is classified as polite because the status of the SMS writer (speaker) is a student who uses polite narrative strategies to the recipient of the SMS (addresser) or his lecturer.

c. Negative Politeness Strategy Exp :

x: "Selamat pagi Bu, apa boleh saya minta remidi atau tugas untuk memperbaiki UTS saya?"

y: "Ibu, saya mohon ijin untuk tidak mengikuti kuliah hari ini karena sakit. Terima kasih."

In the examples (x) and (y) above, the author uses the negative politeness strategy of the lecturer not feeling uncomfortable and offended by the SMS sent. The strategy in example (a) can be seen from the question "May I ask for remedies ...?". This strategy does not force lecturers to provide remedies. The negative strategy for example (b) is marked with "I beg for permission".

d. Off-record Politeness Strategy

Example :

x: "*Pak saya sudah ada di depan*"

y: "*Selamat pagi bu, apakah Ibu ada waktu hari ini?*"

The strategy of politeness used in student SMS in the example and (b) is an indirect politeness strategy because students do not say immediately what is desired but use certain instructions. For example (x) student wants his lecturer to call him for guidance on the thesis by saying "Mr. I was at the front". In quotes (y) students ask lecturers whether they have time with the hope of guidance that day.

Conclusion

Politeness is regarded as the linguistic expression of social relationships. Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately especially one's superior in the light of one's relationship. Given the importance of politeness in social interaction this paper sets out to investigate the politeness strategies students employ and to discover the extent of impoliteness among the students with their lecturers. The theoretical framework used to analyze the discourse was Brown and Levison's Politeness theory. It was discovered that there were situations where students' utterances and actions amounted to impoliteness and face-threatening acts (FTA). Such behaviors often lead to friction and conflicts. The paper concludes that for a harmonious and peaceful co-existence students must avoid facing threatening acts in their language use.

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