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Politeness in Speech Between Students and Lecturers at The State Islamic University of North Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of politeness in speech between students and lecturers at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN-SU). Using a library research method, the study examines various theories and frameworks of politeness to identify the linguistic strategies employed in academic interactions. Drawing from scholarly works and previous studies, the research highlights how cultural, social, and religious values influence the expressions of politeness within the academic setting. The findings suggest that students tend to use formal and honorific language as a sign of respect, while lecturers often adopt a balanced tone to foster an engaging and respectful learning environment. This study underscores the importance of maintaining polite communication as a reflection of academic and Islamic ethical values, contributing to harmonious interactions in the educational context.

Keywords: *Politeness, Speech, Students, Lecturers, Islamic Values.*

INTRODUCTION

Politeness in communication between students and lecturers within an academic setting is a crucial aspect influencing interactions and the learning atmosphere. At the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, politeness strategies serve as vital tools for fostering harmonious and effective communication. Research indicates that these strategies are employed to minimize face-threatening acts (FTAs) and support smooth interactions in classroom discussions. These include positive and negative politeness strategies, as well as off-record approaches to maintain communication harmony. (Putra, 2016).

In administrative contexts, staff in the Islamic Education Department at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra often use bald-on-record politeness strategies to save time and avoid ambiguity, especially when interacting with large numbers of students. However, positive politeness strategies are also employed to create a friendly and approachable atmosphere, while negative politeness strategies help maintain students' face awareness in situations involving mistakes. This highlights the need to adapt politeness strategies based on the communication context and objectives. (Yahsya, 2016)

In online communication, such as chatrooms and email, students and lecturers at the State Islamic University of Salatiga apply principles of politeness and impoliteness in their interactions. Research shows that students tend to view politeness as a significant aspect of their communicative actions, although instances of impoliteness have also been observed. Religious expressions are frequently used to reinforce politeness effects in cyber communication.

At Perjuangan University of Tasikmalaya, studies reveal that many students often use less polite language in interactions with lecturers, including the use of slang and disregard for communication ethics. Environmental factors and relationships outside the campus influence students' communication patterns, potentially damaging the university's reputation and creating disharmony in the academic environment. Awareness of the importance of polite language and active institutional efforts to provide communication ethics guidance can help foster a more conducive academic environment. (Risdiyanto et al., 2023)

Overall, politeness strategies in communication between students and lecturers at Islamic universities in Indonesia play a pivotal role in establishing effective and harmonious interactions. (Saputra et al., 2024) This research emphasizes the importance of adapting politeness strategies to communication contexts and the need for awareness and guidance in maintaining communication ethics within academic environments.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses library research to analyze aspects of politeness in communication between students and lecturers in an academic environment. The research begins by determining the main topic and focus of the research, namely politeness strategies in academic communication. Furthermore, data is collected from various relevant library sources, such as academic books, indexed journal articles, and proceedings. These sources are then classified based on their relevance and validity, where only high-quality literature is used. The data is analyzed descriptively-qualitatively using politeness theories, such as Brown and Levinson's theory and Leech's politeness principle, as a conceptual framework. The analysis is carried out through the steps of description, interpretation, comparison, and synthesis to produce conclusions that are in accordance with the research objectives. Data validity is maintained by selecting credible library sources, while reliability is obtained through cross-referencing

to ensure consistency of information. The results of the study are presented descriptively to provide a comprehensive picture of politeness strategies in academic communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Politeness in communication between students and lecturers is a crucial element in creating a supportive academic environment. The use of politeness strategies is deeply influenced by cultural, social, and religious factors that shape interactions within the academic setting at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN-SU). Studies have shown that these strategies are vital for reducing face-threatening acts (FTAs) and ensuring smooth communication.

Students commonly implement positive politeness strategies, such as expressing gratitude, aligning with lecturers' views, and demonstrating enthusiasm in participating in academic activities. As per Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, these strategies aim to build solidarity and reduce social barriers, (Rahardi, 2005). Moreover, the use of religious phrases, such as *Assalamu'alaikum*, *Alhamdulillah*, and *Insha Allah*, enhances politeness, reflecting the integration of Islamic principles, (Leech, 1983).

In contrast, negative politeness strategies are often employed in formal requests or when students express disagreements. These include using indirect speech, modal expressions, and hedging to avoid being intrusive. Such strategies align with research emphasizing their role in upholding respect for authority and fostering harmonious relationships, (Holmes, 2013).

Lecturers frequently adopt bald-on-record strategies in the classroom, particularly when giving direct instructions or feedback. This method ensures clarity and minimizes ambiguity in conveying educational content. Nevertheless, lecturers also utilize positive politeness strategies in less formal contexts to motivate students and acknowledge their contributions (Saragih2020).

Cultural norms significantly influence communication patterns at UIN-SU. As part of a high-context communication culture, both students and lecturers emphasize non-verbal signals, situational understanding, and maintaining social harmony. This cultural dimension aligns with theory (Yusuf, 2017), which underscores the connection between cultural characteristics and communication styles.

In administrative interactions, different politeness patterns emerge. Administrative staff often rely on bald-on-record strategies to maintain efficiency, especially during peak times like course registration. However, they also employ positive politeness to create a friendly atmosphere and ease stress in administrative processes (Rahardi,2009).

Politeness strategies are also observed in digital communication, such as emails and instant messaging. While many students adhere to politeness principles, some tend to use less formal or even impolite language in online interactions. This variability is partly due to the casual nature of digital communication, (Crystal, 2006).

Several challenges in applying politeness strategies have been noted. For instance, students may struggle to balance respect and assertiveness, especially when voicing disagreements. Additionally, external influences, such as societal expectations and peer pressure, often shape communication behaviors, (Yule, 1996).

Literature emphasizes the importance of fostering ethical communication in academic contexts. Initiatives such as workshops, training programs, and regular reinforcement of Islamic teachings can help students better understand the significance of politeness in communication. As (Suyono & Hariyanto, 2014) points out, effective communication requires not only linguistic skills but also the ability to use language appropriately within a sociocultural context, (Suyono & Hariyanto, 2014).

Thus, politeness in communication between students and lecturers at UIN-SU reflects a blend of cultural, social, and religious values. While both groups generally maintain respectful and constructive interactions, challenges remain, particularly in adapting politeness strategies to diverse contexts, including digital platforms. Promoting Islamic values and offering structured communication training are essential steps toward creating a more harmonious academic environment.

CONCLUSION

Politeness in communication between students and lecturers at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN-SU) plays a significant role in fostering a harmonious and effective academic environment. Research findings indicate that students tend to apply positive politeness strategies to strengthen interpersonal relationships, while negative politeness strategies are employed in formal situations to show respect toward lecturers. Meanwhile, lecturers often utilize bald-on-record strategies to ensure message clarity but also adopt positive politeness strategies in informal contexts.

Cultural factors and Islamic values greatly influence these communication patterns. Highcontext cultural characteristics and respect for authority are prominently reflected in daily academic interactions. Additionally, the use of religious expressions further enhances the politeness aspect of communication, illustrating the integration of religious values into campus life.

Nevertheless, challenges in maintaining politeness persist, particularly in digital communication and the differing perceptions between students and lecturers. The informal nature of communication on digital platforms sometimes leads to misunderstandings or a decline in politeness standards.

To address these challenges, strategic measures such as communication ethics training, reinforcing religious values in the curriculum, and improving communication competence for both students and lecturers are necessary. Through such approaches, a more harmonious, effective, and value-based communication environment can be established at UIN-SU. Politeness in language use is not merely a communication tool but also a reflection of cultural and academic identity that must be preserved.

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