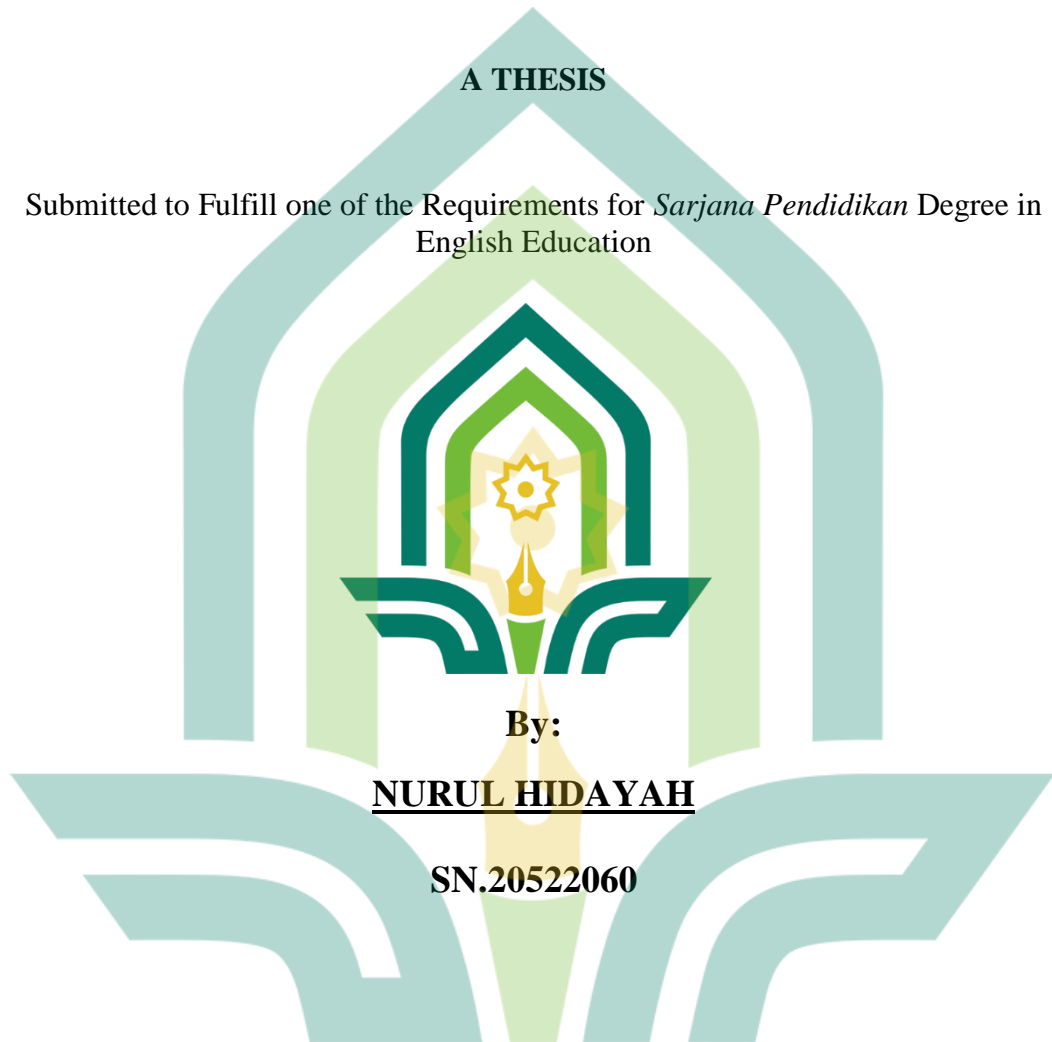


**POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN STUDENTS' INTERACTION
DURING ACADEMIC SPEAKING CLASS**

A THESIS

Submitted to Fulfill one of the Requirements for *Sarjana Pendidikan* Degree in
English Education



By:

NURUL HIDAYAH

SN.20522060

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

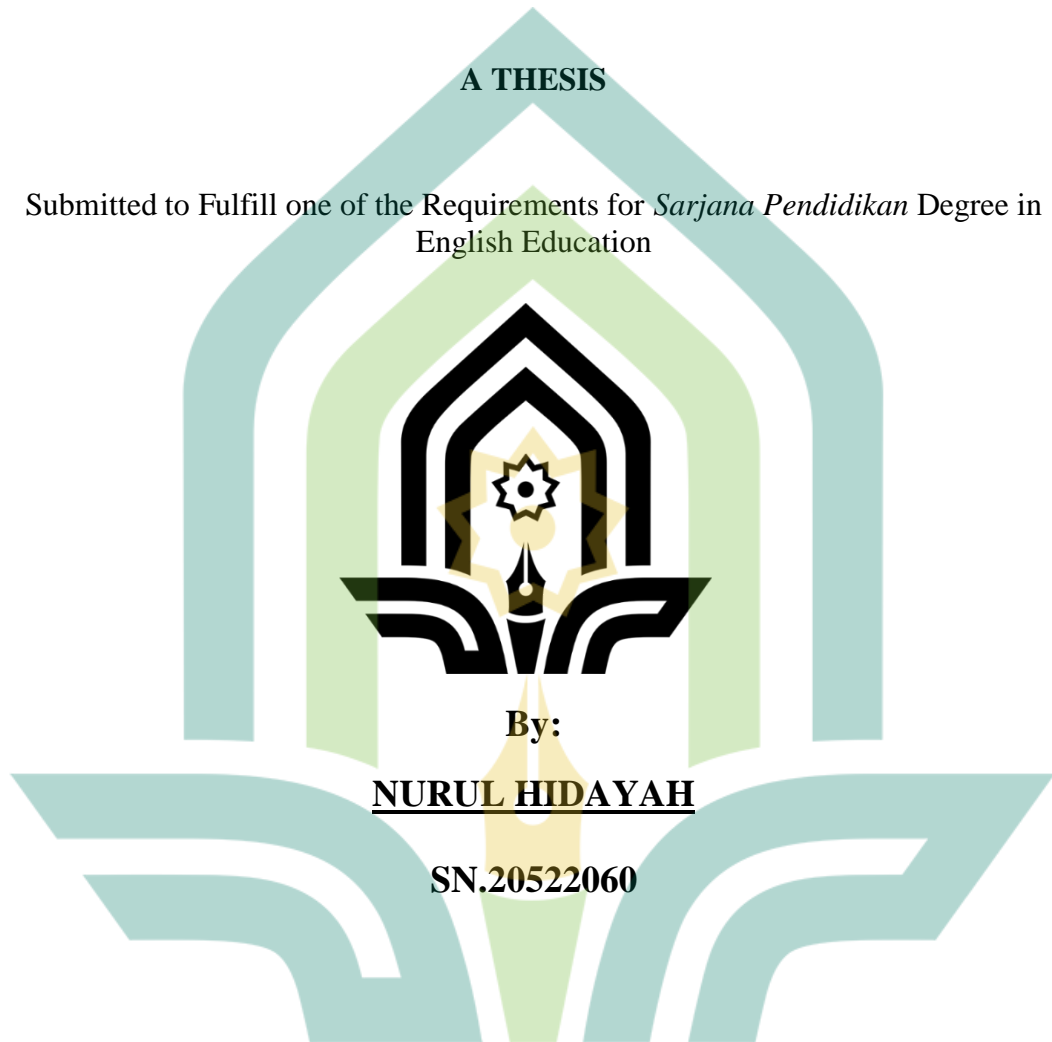
UIN K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN

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NIM : 20522060

Program Studi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris

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Nurul Hidayah

SN.20522060

Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd.

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NIM : 20522060

Jurusan : FTIK/Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Judul : Politeness Strategies In Students' Interaction During Academic Speaking Class

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TARBIYAH DAN ILMU KEGURUAN**

Jalan Pahlawan KM. 5 Rowolaku, Kajen, Kabupaten Pekalongan
Website: ftik.uingusdur.ac.id Email: ftik@uingusdur.ac.id

APPROVAL SHEET

The dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, approved this thesis by

Name : Nurul Hidayah

NIM : 20522060

Title : **“POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN STUDENTS’
INTERACTION DURING ACADEMIC SPEAKING
CLASS”**

Has been established through an examination held on 12th March 2026 and accepted in partial fulfillments of requirements for the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd.)

Examiners

Examiner I

Dr. M. Ali Ghufron, M.Pd.
NIP. 19870723 202012 1 004

Examiner II

Isriani Hardini, S.S., M.A., Ph.D.
NIP. 19810530 200901 2 007

Pekalongan, 31st March 2026

Approved by
The Dean of FTIK UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan



Prof. Dr. H. Muhsin, M.Ag.
SIP. 19700706 199803 1 001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT, for all the abundant grace, guidance, and blessings that have always provided health and ease in every step until this thesis could be completed well. Prayers and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW. With a heart full of gratitude and sincerity, the author dedicates this humble work to:

1. To my most beloved parents, Papa Subiyanto and Mama Rohmani. The author would like to express the deepest gratitude for every sacrifice and sincerity that has been given all this time. Although papa and mama never had the chance to experience studying at a university level, it never stopped them from always trying to give the best for their children. Without knowing exhaustion, papa and mama continued to pray, worked hard, provided encouragement both morally and financially, and made the education and happiness of their children the top priority in life.

The journey we have gone through together as a family was indeed full of challenges and did not always run smoothly, but it was from every obstacle that the author learned many valuable lessons about how to become a strong woman, full of responsibility, never giving up, and capable of standing on her own two feet. Hopefully the author's success in completing this thesis can be a source of pride for papa and mama, because your first daughter has

now successfully earned a bachelor's degree as has long been dreamed of and hoped for.

The author's greatest hope is that papa and mama will always be blessed with good health, a long life, and can still witness the many other achievements that the author will accomplish in the future.

2. My younger sister, Atika Salma Ratifa, who has always been a source of motivation for the author to keep growing and learning to become a figure of an older sister who is capable of bringing a positive impact, both in academic and non-academic matters. Her presence encourages the author to always strive to be a good role model and example for her in the future.
3. To the author's thesis advisor, Ma'am. Eros Meilina Sofa. Thank you for all the time, energy, and knowledge that you have poured into guiding the author throughout the process of completing this thesis. Your patience and guidance became a light during the moments when the author felt stuck and lost direction. Your guidance was not only about the thesis, but also taught the author to be more careful, more patient, and more responsible in every process that was undertaken. May your kindness and sincerity in guiding the author always be repaid with the best of things, and may you always be blessed with good health and blessings in every step of your life.
4. For the friends in struggle who are part of the group *Bjir Hijrah*, Nova Purwandini, Aisyah Putri Agustin, Zalfa Nur Maulidina, Indhi Rahmasari, Khovivah, and Diah Ayu Puspa Ningrum. You are the people who have accompanied the author throughout college life, going through the ups and

downs together. From staying up late to finish assignments to encouraging each other when everything felt overwhelming, you were always there and never missed a single moment of that struggle.

There are so many things we have been through together, countless laughter, complaints that were always listened to, and the spirit you always gave when the author started to waver. Without your presence, this college journey would certainly not have been as beautiful and memorable as it was.

Hopefully after this we can each achieve what we have always dreamed of, and even though distance may separate us later, this friendship will never fade. Thank you for being a part of the most meaningful journey in the author's life.

5. For the overseas friends who are equally far from home and chose UIN as a place to study. From there we have a bond that is hard to explain in words.

Living away from home is indeed not easy, but it became much lighter because of you all. Thank you for being friends as well as family during this time away from home, hopefully we can all finish this journey with results that make us proud.

6. For my beloved Beat Street motorcycle and laptop. You are the two most valuable things throughout this college journey. The Beat Street motorcycle that has always faithfully taken the author wherever needed without ever complaining, accompanying every rushed morning trip and every exhausting night.

And the laptop, the most loyal late-night companion that never protested even when forced to stay on for hours just to finish assignments and the thesis. Without you both, this journey would certainly not have been able to run as smoothly and as easy as it did.

Thank you for never breaking down at the wrong moment, and may you both last long and continue to accompany the author in the next journey ahead.

7. And lastly, for myself. Thank you for being willing to hold on this far, for getting back up every time I fell, and for keep moving forward even when I felt tired and wanted to give up so many times. This journey was not easy, but I managed to prove that I am stronger than all the doubts I have ever felt.

Thank you for not giving up, for being willing to keep fighting even on the hardest days. All the tears, all the long nights, and all the efforts I have put in have finally paid off. This is proof that I am capable, and this is just the beginning of the great things I will achieve in the future. Stay humble, keep growing, and never stop believing in yourself.

MOTTO

"Never forget how you got your new opportunity. Every time you feel tired, remember how hard it was for you to start."

- Yang Chan Mi



ABSTRAK

Kesantunan merupakan aspek penting dalam komunikasi akademik, namun penggunaannya di kalangan mahasiswa EFL dalam kelas Academic Speaking masih kurang dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini mengkaji jenis dan fungsi strategi kesantunan yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa dalam interaksi kelas Academic Speaking. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui rekaman video dari tiga sesi perkuliahan dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan tiga mahasiswa EFL semester lima di sebuah universitas di Pekalongan. Data dianalisis menggunakan teori kesantunan Brown dan Levinson (1987) serta model analisis tematik Braun dan Clarke (2006). Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan tiga dari empat strategi kesantunan, yaitu: kesantunan positif, kesantunan negatif, dan bald on record, sedangkan strategi off record tidak ditemukan. Kesantunan positif menjadi strategi yang paling dominan, digunakan melalui ungkapan seperti "Okay, great" dan "Thank you for the insightful presentation" untuk membangun kedekatan hubungan. Kesantunan negatif muncul dalam permintaan tidak langsung seperti "Can you please mention it?" untuk meminimalkan tekanan, sementara bald on record digunakan untuk pernyataan langsung dan informatif yang mengutamakan kejelasan. Temuan-temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki kesadaran pragmatik dalam mengelola Face Threatening Acts (FTA) selama interaksi akademik berlangsung. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap penelitian pragmatik EFL dan menawarkan wawasan praktis bagi para pendidik dalam menumbuhkan kompetensi komunikatif mahasiswa dalam konteks academic speaking.

Kata Kunci: *Strategi Kesantunan, Academic Speaking, Mahasiswa EFL, Brown Dan Levinson, Pragmatik*

ABSTRACT

Politeness is a crucial aspect of academic communication, yet its use among EFL students in Academic Speaking classes remains underexplored. This study investigates the types and functions of politeness strategies used by students in Academic Speaking class interactions. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through video recordings of three class sessions and semi-structured interviews with three fifth-semester EFL students at a university in Pekalongan. The data were analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model. The findings revealed three out of four politeness strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald on record, while off record was not found. Positive politeness was the most dominant, used through expressions such as "Okay, great" and "Thank you for the insightful presentation" to build rapport. Negative politeness appeared in indirect requests such as "Can you please mention it?" to minimize imposition, while bald on record was used for direct, informative statements prioritizing clarity. These findings demonstrate that students possess pragmatic awareness in managing Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) during academic interactions. This study contributes to EFL pragmatics research and offers practical insights for educators in fostering students' communicative competence in academic speaking contexts.

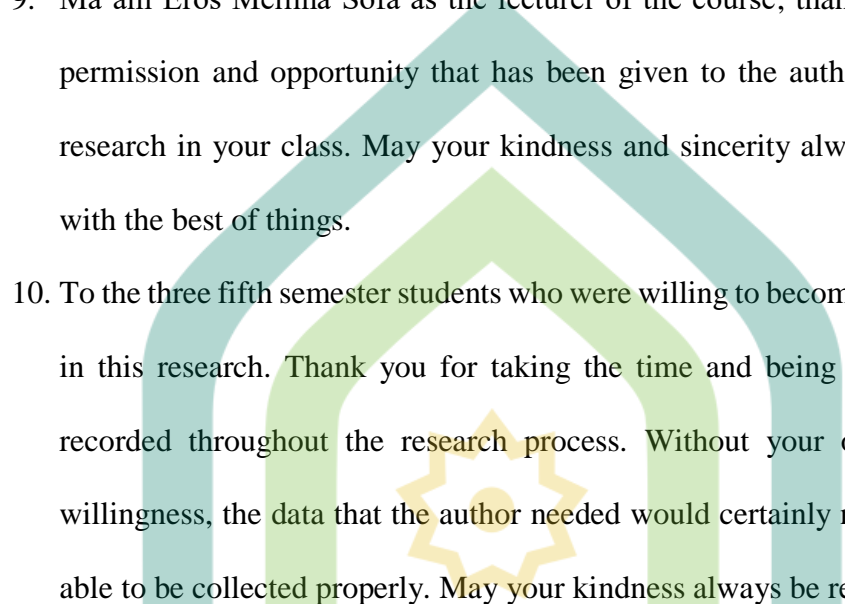
Keywords: *politeness strategies, academic speaking, EFL students, Brown and Levinson, pragmatics*

PREFACE

Praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT who has bestowed His grace. By His blessing, the researcher was able to complete the thesis entitled "**Politeness Strategies In Students' Interaction During Academic Speaking Class**". This thesis was compiled as one of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor's degree in Education. Prayers and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW., may we all receive his intercession in the hereafter, Aamiin.

This research was able to be completed thanks to the assistance of many parties. Therefore, the researcher would like to express gratitude to:

1. Prof. Dr. H. Zaenal Mustakim, M.Ag., as the Rector of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
2. Prof. Dr. H. Muhlisin, M.Ag., as the Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
3. Ahmad Burhanuddin, M.A., as the Head of the English Language Education Study Program, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
4. Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd., as the Secretary of the English Language Education Study Program, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
5. Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd., as the Academic Advisor.
6. Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd., as the Thesis Advisor.
7. All Lecturers and Staff of the English Language Education Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan who have provided knowledge and support throughout the lecture process.

- 
8. UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, as the research site that has given the researcher the opportunity to carry out and complete the research.
 9. Ma'am Eros Meilina Sofa as the lecturer of the course, thank you for the permission and opportunity that has been given to the author to conduct research in your class. May your kindness and sincerity always be repaid with the best of things.
 10. To the three fifth semester students who were willing to become participants in this research. Thank you for taking the time and being willing to be recorded throughout the research process. Without your openness and willingness, the data that the author needed would certainly not have been able to be collected properly. May your kindness always be remembered.

The author is aware of the limitations and shortcomings in both the content and the writing of this thesis. Therefore, criticism and suggestions from all parties are greatly hoped for and will be received with open arms. Hopefully this research can provide meaningful benefits and contributions for future research.

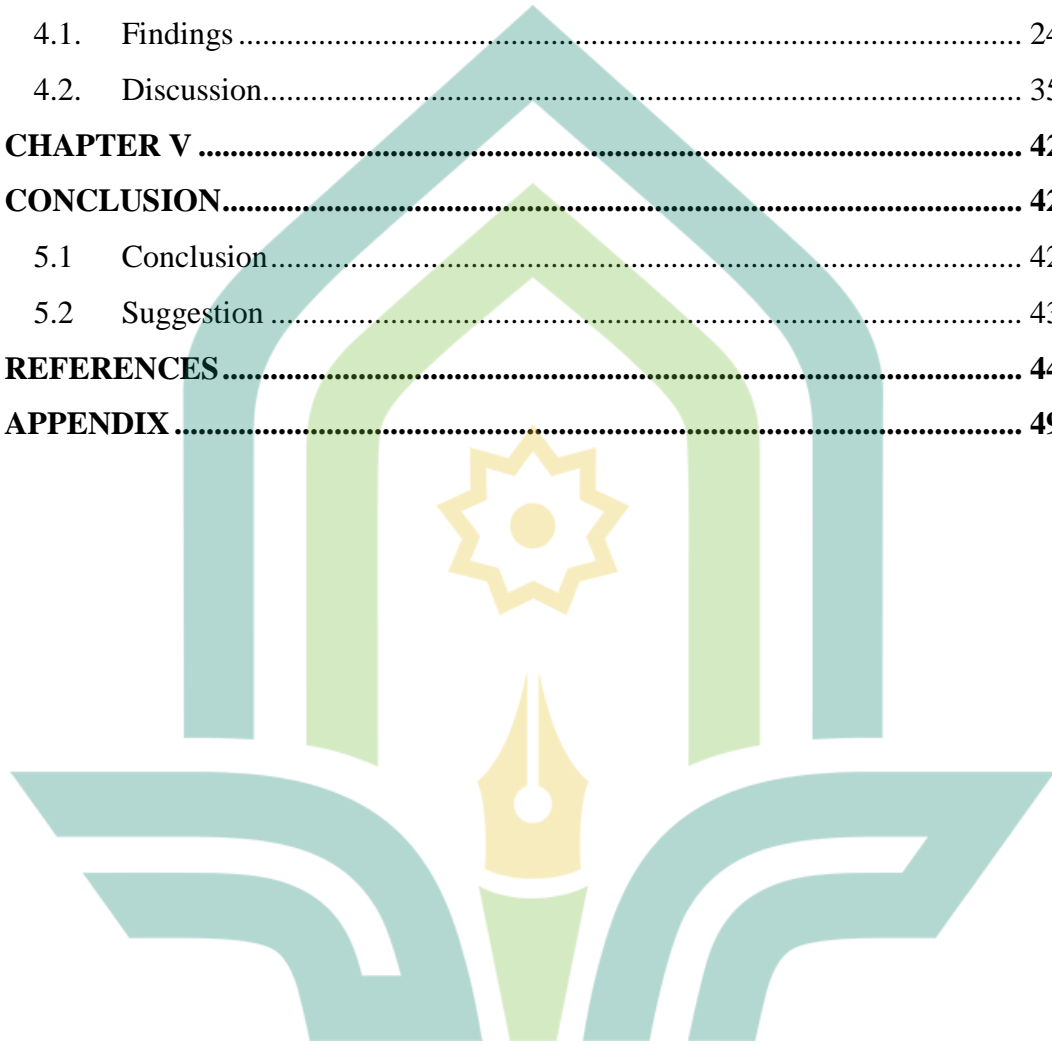
Pekalongan, 09 Maret 2026

The Researcher

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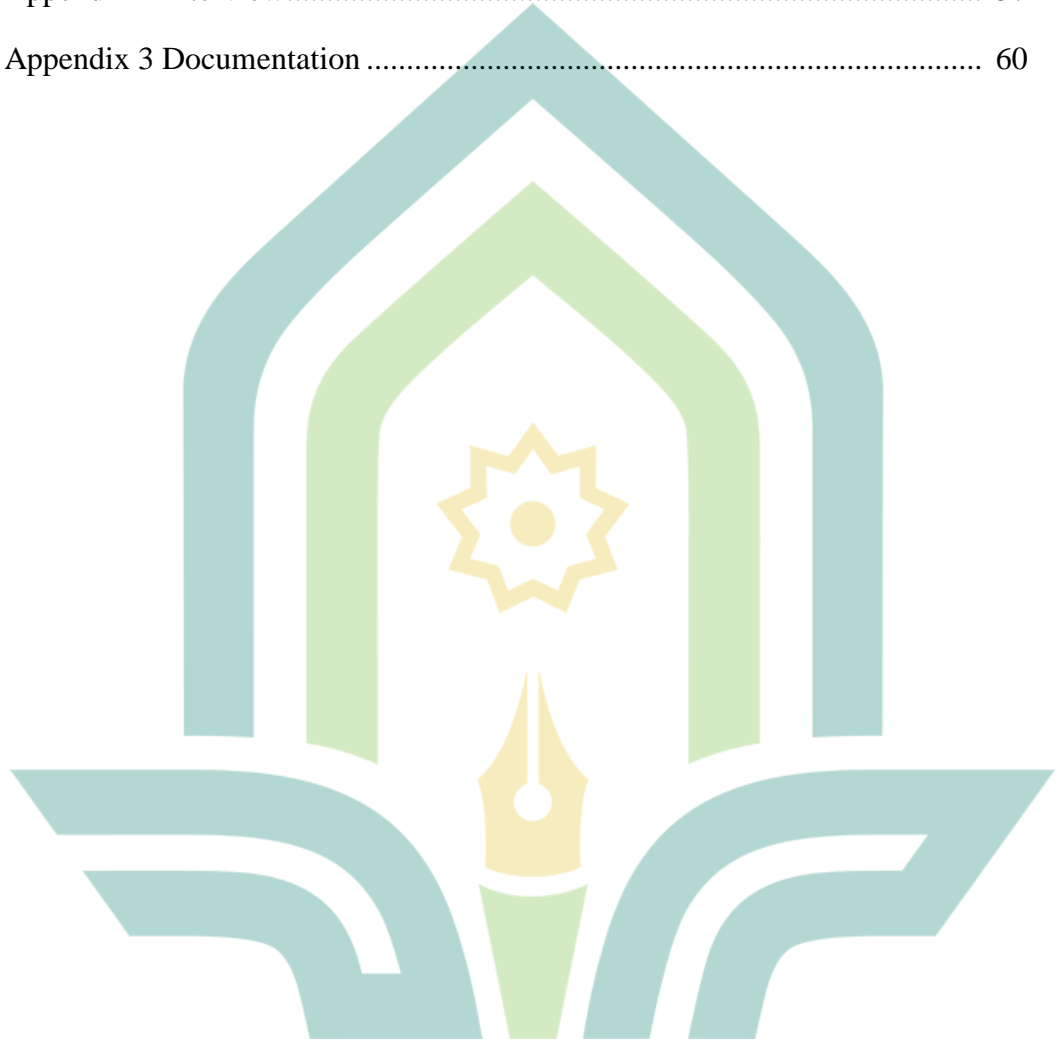
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Academic speaking skills are one of the main aspects of English language learning at the university level. This skill is not only related to fluency in speaking, but also includes the ability to express ideas, opinions, and arguments logically, coherently, and in accordance with the academic context. In various activities such as presentations, discussions, seminars, and debates, students are required to use English effectively and formally in order to demonstrate critical thinking and good academic communication skills (Tuan & Mai, 2015). Thus, mastery of academic speaking skills can be considered one of the markers of student success in learning English in higher education.

One important aspect of speaking skills is politeness. Politeness relates to the speaker's ability to adjust their speech based on social relationships, status, and communication situations. In an academic context, politeness plays an important role because it reflects communication ethics and respect for the interlocutor, such as lecturers and classmates. According to Yule (1996), politeness functions as a social tool that helps maintain harmony in verbal interactions. Thus, applying politeness in speaking helps students maintain a positive image and improve the effectiveness of communication in academic classes.

Politeness plays an important role in creating harmonious communication, especially in formal contexts such as academic classes. The use of appropriate politeness strategies allows speakers to convey ideas without offending others and maintain good social relationships (Holmes, 2013). In academic situations, students who are able to express themselves politely are considered to have mature pragmatic skills, which contribute to a more open and respectful learning atmosphere.

In general, politeness strategies are ways that speakers use to save face for themselves and their conversation partners in communication. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that there are four types of politeness strategies, namely bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. These strategies are used based on social distance, power, and the level of threat to face in communication. Fathi (2024) asserts that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory remains relevant in the context of modern communication, including in academic interactions that demand high formality and social sensitivity. In addition, Turculet (2022) notes that the implementation of positive politeness strategies in higher education plays an important role in strengthening solidarity and mutual respect among students.

However, there is still a lack of research on politeness strategies, especially in the context of student interactions in academic speaking classes. Previous studies have mostly focused on teacher-student interactions or classroom discussions in general. For example, research by

Piantari and Bawarti (2021) focused on the use of politeness techniques in the context of thesis supervision, while a study by Nurditasari (2023) explored the application of politeness strategies in English language education majors. The lack of research that specifically examines the use of politeness strategies in the context of Academic Speaking, such as presentations, academic discussions, or debates, shows that this area has not been fully explored. In addition, based on the researcher's experience in academic speaking classes, many students still face difficulties in balancing fluency, academic language, and politeness when speaking in English, particularly when expressing disagreement, critical opinions, or responding to arguments. This indicates that the use of politeness strategies in Academic Speaking contexts, such as presentations, discussions, and debates, has not been fully explored. Therefore, this area remains a research gap that needs further investigation.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types and functions of politeness strategies used by students in interactions during Academic Speaking lessons. Through this study, it is hoped that an overview can be obtained of how EFL students apply politeness in English in an academic context, as well as how this supports the development of pragmatic competence and effective communication in the classroom.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background described above, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. What type the students use politeness strategies in Academic Speaking classes?
2. Why do students use politeness strategies in the interaction in academic speaking classes?

1.3 Aim(s) of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problems above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out how the four politeness strategies are used by students when speaking in Academic Speaking classes.
2. To find out the reasons why students choose certain politeness strategies when speaking in Academic Speaking classes.

1.4 Operational Definitions

1. Politeness Strategy: The way students speak to show respect, avoid conflict, and maintain positive relationships while interacting in class. (Brown & Levinson, 1987).
2. Academic Speaking: A classroom activity where students practice formal English speaking through discussions, presentations, and academic conversations (Goh & Burns, 2012).

3. **Student Interaction:** The verbal communication that occurs among students when expressing opinions, giving responses, or asking questions during Academic Speaking activities (Walsh, 2011).

1.5 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical

This study is expected to give a contribution to the study of pragmatics, especially in understanding how politeness strategies are used by students in Academic Speaking class.

2. Empirical

This study provides empirical data on the application of politeness strategies in student interactions in the classroom. The results can be useful as a reference for future researchers interested in studying classroom communication or language use in academic contexts.

3. Practical

The results of this study can help students develop polite communication skills, respect others when speaking in class, and increase their pragmatic awareness in using appropriate politeness strategies during academic interactions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that three out of four types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) were found in students' interactions during Academic Speaking classes, namely positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald on record, while the off record strategy was not identified in the data. Positive politeness was the most dominant strategy, used through expressions such as "*Okay, great,*" "*Good morning everyone,*" and "*Thank you for the insightful presentation,*" aimed at fulfilling the interlocutor's positive face the desire to be appreciated and accepted by creating a warm and interactive atmosphere during presentations. Negative politeness appeared in utterances like "*Can you please mention it?*" and "*I would like to invite Mr. Michael,*" reflecting students' effort to protect the interlocutor's negative face the desire to have freedom of action without pressure through indirect and respectful forms of request. Meanwhile, the bald on record strategy was used in direct and informative statements such as "*The red one shows the students need urgent help*", "*The number one is academic.*" prioritizing clarity and professionalism over face concerns when delivering key information. Overall, these findings demonstrate that students in Academic Speaking classes possess pragmatic awareness in maintaining face and

adjusting their speech according to the social context and academic communication norms in the classroom.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the conclusions above, the following suggestions are offered:

1. For students, it is recommended to continue developing pragmatic awareness, particularly in recognizing the appropriate type of politeness strategy for different academic situations. Students should also be encouraged to practice a wider range of politeness strategies, including the off-record strategy, in order to become more versatile and effective communicators in English academic contexts.
2. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct similar studies with a larger number of participants and a wider range of Academic Speaking activities, such as debates and seminars. Examining additional variables such as gender, cultural background, or language proficiency level may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how politeness strategies are used in EFL academic contexts

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