

**TEACHERS' POLITENESS STRATEGIES
IN MANAGING STUDENTS' MISBEHAVIOUR IN
AN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM
AT A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

A THESIS

**Submitted to fulfill one of the Requirements for *Sarjana Pendidikan* Degree
at English Education Department**



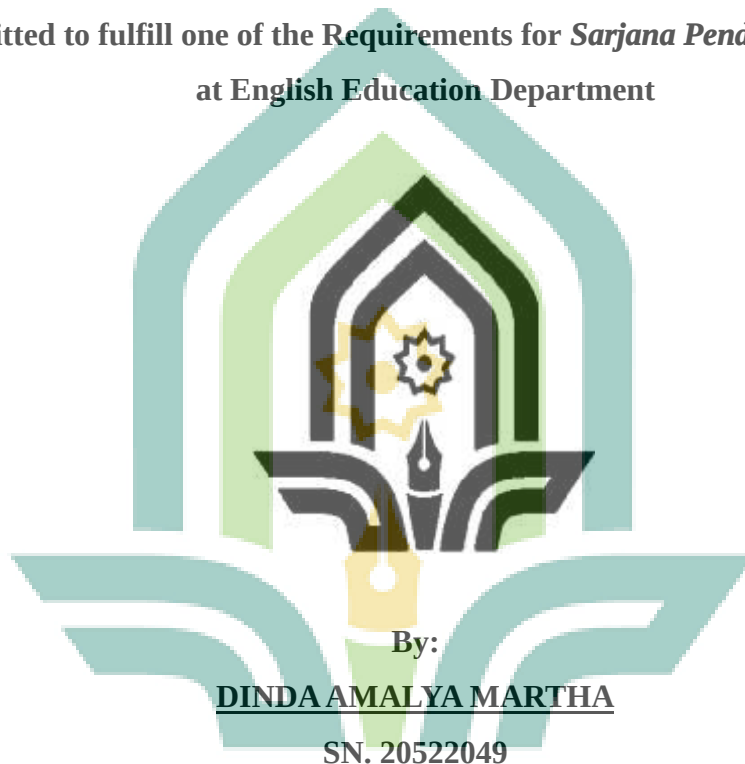
**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN**

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2026**

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Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.

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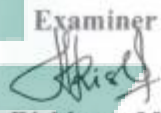
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MOTTO

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.”

- Bukhari & Muslim –

“Tough you may not know where your gifts may lead and it may not show
at the start. When you live your dreams, you’ll find destiny”

- Written in your heart -



ABSTRAK

Perilaku menyimpang siswa (students' misbehaviour) merupakan salah satu tantangan yang sering dihadapi guru dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi strategi kesantunan yang digunakan guru EFL dalam mengelola perilaku menyimpang siswa serta tantangan yang mereka hadapi dalam menerapkan strategi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan dua guru EFL di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menggunakan empat strategi kesantunan, yaitu positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, dan off-record, dengan positive politeness sebagai strategi yang paling sering digunakan. Penelitian ini juga menemukan beberapa tantangan, yaitu kurangnya respons siswa terhadap teguran yang santun, keberagaman karakteristik siswa, kebutuhan untuk mengendalikan emosi, serta tantangan dalam menjaga ketertiban kelas sambil mencapai tujuan pembelajaran. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi kesantunan dapat membantu guru mengelola perilaku menyimpang siswa secara efektif, tetapi keberhasilannya bergantung pada kemampuan guru menyesuaikan komunikasi dengan situasi kelas yang dihadapi.

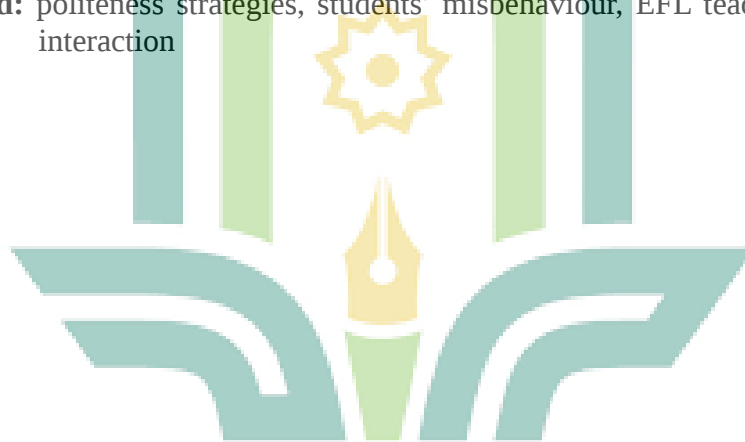
Kata kunci: *strategi kesantunan, perilaku menyimpang siswa, guru EFL, interaksi kelas*



ABSTRACT

Students' misbehaviour is one of the challenges frequently encountered by teachers in English language learning. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the politeness strategies employed by EFL teachers in managing students' misbehaviour and the challenges they encountered in implementing those strategies. This study employed a qualitative case study design. The data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with two EFL teachers at a junior high school. The findings showed that the teachers used four politeness strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record, with positive politeness being the most frequently used strategy. The findings also revealed several challenges, including students' lack of responsiveness to polite warnings, diverse student characteristics, the need for emotional regulation, and the challenge of maintaining classroom order while achieving learning objectives. Overall, the study suggests that politeness strategies can help teachers manage students' misbehaviour effectively; however, their success depends on teachers' ability to adapt their communication to different classroom situations.

Keyword: politeness strategies, students' misbehaviour, EFL teacher, classroom interaction



PREFACE

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for His endless blessings, mercy, guidance, and strength that have enabled the researcher to complete this undergraduate thesis entitled “*Teachers’ Politeness Strategies in Managing Students’ Misbehaviour in an English as a Foreign Language Classroom at a Junior High School*” as one of the requirements for obtaining a bachelor's degree in the English Education Department. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support, guidance, encouragement, and prayers from many individuals. Therefore, the researcher would like to express sincere appreciation to all those who have contributed, either directly or indirectly, throughout the process of completing this study.

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May this thesis provide valuable insights for readers and contribute to the development of educational research, particularly in the area of politeness strategies in managing students' misbehaviour in EFL classrooms.

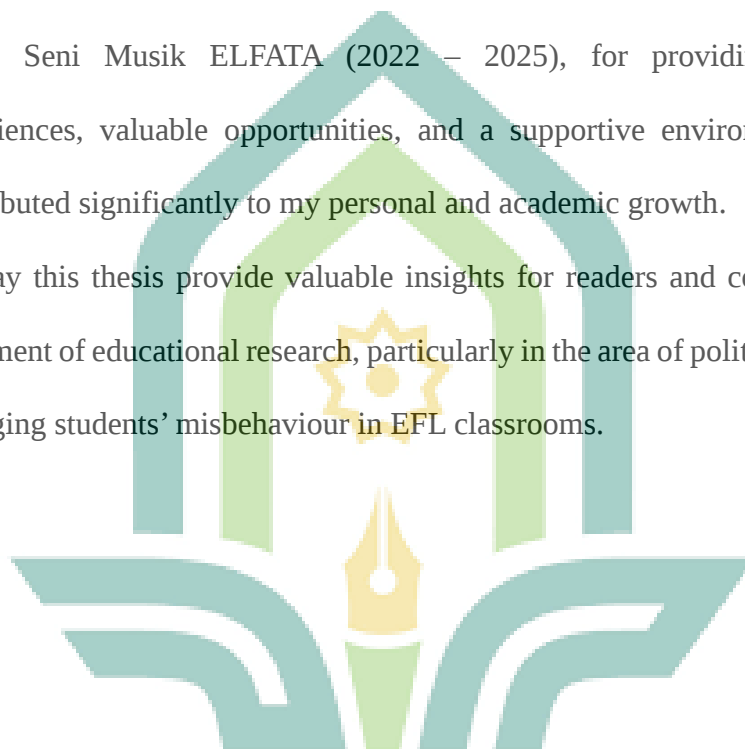
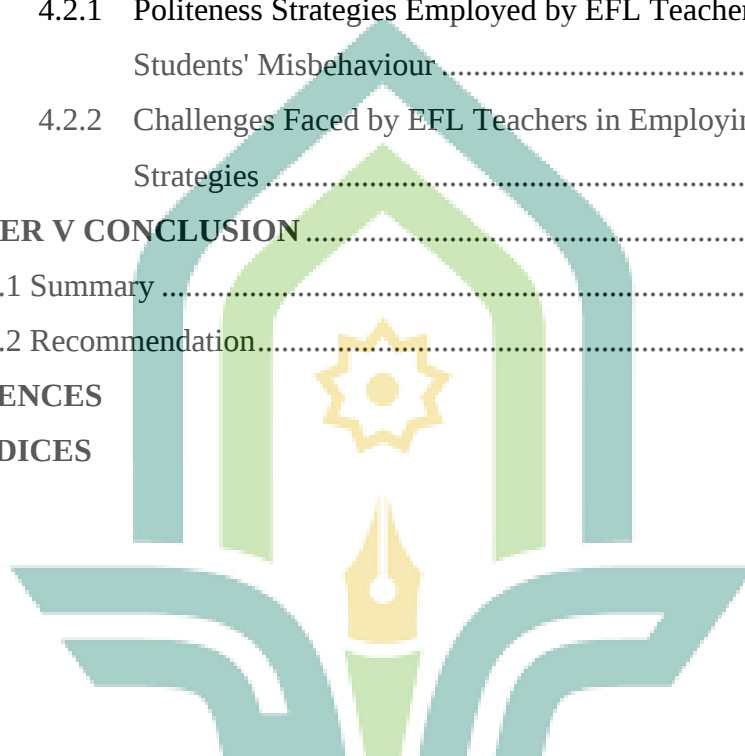


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesian junior high schools, classroom interaction typically involves active exchanges between teachers and students through activities such as questioning, giving instructions, checking understanding, and guiding communicative tasks. Effective learning in these settings strongly depends on the quality of teacher–student relationships, as supportive interaction helps build engagement, encourages participation, and creates a comfortable learning atmosphere (Ruswandi et al., 2024). According to Aziez & Sotlikova, (2025), positive interaction between teachers and students in EFL classrooms significantly influences students’ motivation and willingness to participate in learning activities. In practice, teachers are expected to manage the flow of learning while maintaining meaningful interaction, ensuring that students remain attentive, involved, and responsive throughout classroom activities.

Building on the interactional context described earlier, pre-observation conducted by the researcher during a teaching practicum at a junior high school in Pekalongan, Central Java showed that English classes for Grades seven to nine exhibited persistent misbehaviours. These behaviours included students talking loudly without permission, ignoring teacher instructions, walking around the classroom without authorization, and engaging in off-task activities such as chatting with peers or distracting others during lessons. This condition

can be understood by considering that junior high school students are experiencing what Waters et al. (2012) describe as a difficult period involving a complex interplay between genetics, biology, and social and emotional relationships during a critical period of their developmental pathway. As a result, students at this level are more prone to display misbehaviour, particularly when classroom interaction is not managed effectively. Such behaviours made it difficult for teachers to sustain the intended learning flow and created emotionally demanding teaching situations, as various forms of misbehaviour such as inattention, needless talk, and moving about the room have been documented as common challenges in Indonesian EFL classrooms (Khair, 2022). In the observed classes, misbehaviour consumed a considerable amount of instructional time and required teachers to repeatedly redirect attention, reducing opportunities for meaningful learning. This condition aligns with broader findings in EFL classroom research, which show that inattentiveness and off-task behaviours such as side-talk and group disruptions significantly undermine lesson effectiveness and complicate teachers' efforts to maintain student engagement (Solicha, 2024). These classroom management challenges highlight the critical need for teachers to develop effective pedagogical interaction strategies to create conducive language learning environments (Sundari, 2018).

In this study, politeness strategies are positioned as the primary analytical focus in understanding how teachers manage misbehaviour in EFL classrooms. Drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, politeness strategies

including positive, negative, off-record, and bald-on-record approaches are examined as communicative resources used by teachers to address disruptions while maintaining students' face, authority, and classroom rapport. Classroom management theory is integrated as a supporting framework to contextualize the use of politeness strategies within instructional practice.

Despite the frequent use of politeness strategies in EFL classroom interaction, classroom management observations showed that the ways in which these strategies are applied vary widely and do not always lead to effective control of misbehaviour in real time. Classroom data suggested that teachers often alternate between softened directives (positive and negative politeness) and direct commands (bald-on-record) depending on the situation, yet maintaining both rapport and order remains difficult when disruptions occur suddenly or repeatedly. Several recent studies document the prevalence of politeness strategies in EFL classrooms but stop short of explaining how those strategies function specifically during on-the-spot behavioural disruptions or how they interact with established classroom management techniques (Fitriati et al., 2017). For example, a study from Fitriyani & Andriyanti, (2020) identifies and classifies politeness strategies used by teachers and students in senior high school classroom talk but do not examine how those strategies are adapted during misbehaviour episodes. Similarly, Adhari & Sesmiyanti, (2022) describes the forms and realizations of positive politeness in classroom interaction yet focuses on overall interactional effectiveness rather than on tactical responses to misbehaviour. Furthermore,

observations from junior high school classroom contexts show extensive use of politeness strategies by both teachers and students but stop short of detailing how these strategies are integrated with proactive classroom management techniques to address misbehaviour on the spot (Maslucha, 2024). These patterns reveal that the existing literature, although rich in descriptions of politeness strategies, still lacks in-depth analysis of how and why teachers select specific politeness strategies when they encounter real-time disruptions during EFL teaching.

Therefore, to address this gap, this qualitative case study examines how EFL teachers in a junior high school in Pekalongan employ politeness strategies in real time to manage misbehaviour. This study focused on uncovering the practical challenges teachers face when selecting and applying politeness strategies during sudden or repeated disruptions, as well as identifying contextual factors that support their effectiveness. By doing so, this research aims to provide pedagogical insights that help teachers balance discipline and relational communication, ultimately supporting more harmonious and productive EFL learning environments.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What politeness strategies are used by English teachers to manage students' misbehaviour in an EFL junior high school classroom?

2. What challenges do English teachers face in using politeness strategies to manage students' misbehaviour in an EFL junior high school classroom?

1.3 Aim(s) of the Study

In line with the research questions, the aims of the study are:

1. To identify the politeness strategies used by English teachers to manage students' misbehaviour in EFL junior high school classrooms
2. To explore the challenges English teachers face when using politeness strategies to manage students' misbehaviour in EFL junior school classrooms

1.4 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms of this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to the study as follows:

1. Politeness strategies : Politeness strategies are language choices used by speakers to minimize face-threatening acts and to maintain respect and harmony in social interaction, including teacher–student communication in the classroom (Brown & Levinson, 1987, as cited in Wati et al., 2025).
2. Misbehaviour : Misbehaviour refers to students' actions that interfere with the teaching–learning process and classroom order, such as talking out of turn, not paying attention, moving around unnecessarily, or disturbing classmates during lessons (Jayanti et al., 2024).

1.5 Significances of the Research

The researcher expects that this research can provide the following advantages:

1. Theoretical use : This study contributes to pragmatic and classroom management theory by showing how teachers use politeness strategies to manage students' misbehaviour in junior high school EFL classrooms, using Brown and Levinson's politeness as guiding perspectives.
2. Empirical use : This study provides nuanced qualitative evidence on teachers' real-time decision-making when selecting politeness strategies during misbehaviour moments, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interface pragmatic in practice through observations and interviews.
3. Practical use : This study offers practical insights for English teachers, student-teachers, and school practitioners on how to apply politeness strategies effectively to maintain discipline while preserving positive teacher–student relationships.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Based on the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter, this study found that EFL teachers employed four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), namely positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record strategies in managing students' misbehaviour in the classroom. Rather than relying on a single strategy, the teachers continuously adjusted their communication according to classroom situations, students' characteristics, and the level of misbehaviour encountered. Among the four strategies, positive politeness emerged as the most frequently used strategy, reflecting the teachers' tendency to maintain positive teacher-student relationships while addressing inappropriate behaviour. Through praise, friendly expressions, humor, and personal approaches, teachers attempted to manage classroom behaviour without threatening students' feelings. At the same time, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record strategies were also employed when required by particular classroom situations, indicating that politeness strategies function as flexible communicative tools rather than fixed communication patterns.

However, the findings also revealed several challenges in the implementation of these strategies. Students' lack of responsiveness to polite warnings, differences in students' characteristics, the need for emotional regulation, and the challenge of maintaining classroom order while achieving

learning objectives often influenced how effective the strategies were in practice. In many situations, teachers needed to modify or shift their strategies to respond to students' reactions and classroom demands. These findings suggest that the successful implementation of politeness strategies depends not only on the strategies themselves but also on teachers' ability to adapt their communication to different classroom conditions. Therefore, politeness strategies should be viewed as dynamic and context-sensitive resources that help teachers balance classroom discipline with positive interpersonal relationships.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that EFL teachers use the results of this research as a reference in managing students' misbehaviour through the use of appropriate politeness strategies. Since students have different characteristics, emotional conditions, and levels of responsiveness, teachers are encouraged to employ various politeness strategies rather than relying on a single approach. Positive and negative politeness strategies may help maintain positive teacher–student relationships, while bald-on-record strategies can be used when immediate behavioural correction is necessary. In addition, teachers should pay attention not only to verbal communication but also to non-verbal aspects such as tone of voice, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and physical proximity, as these elements can strengthen the effectiveness of politeness strategies and contribute to a supportive classroom environment. Teachers are also

encouraged to develop emotional regulation skills so that corrective feedback can be delivered in a calm, respectful, and constructive manner, even in challenging classroom situations.

Regarding future research, this study is limited by its focus on two EFL teachers in one junior high school context and by its emphasis on teachers' experiences in employing politeness strategies to manage students' misbehaviour. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to explore more deeply how different politeness strategies are selected and adapted in response to various forms of students' misbehaviour and classroom situations. Future studies are also recommended to investigate the challenges teachers encounter when implementing politeness strategies, particularly those related to students' responsiveness, diverse student characteristics, emotional regulation, and maintaining classroom order while achieving learning objectives. Furthermore, future research may involve different educational levels, schools, subject areas, or research designs to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of politeness strategies in classroom management.

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