POLITENESS STRATEGIES EXPRESSED BY EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN WHATSAPP GROUP INTERACTIONS

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education

By:

ISMA NUR SRI HARTINI
SN. 2519102

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
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Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya.

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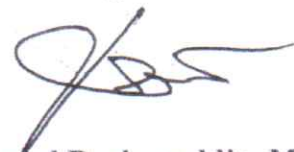Dengan ini mohon agar Skripsi Saudara tersebut dapat segera dimunaqasahkan.

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Atas perhatiannya, saya sampaikan terimakasih.

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"Barang siapa keluar untuk mencari sebuah ilmu, maka ia akan berada di jalan Allah hingga ia kembali"
(H.R. Tirmidzi)

"It's okay to fail as long as you know that you did your best. What's the worst it could get? You just have to try again, it is okay, and it's not the end!"
(@doshiyoshi900)

ABSTRAK

Untuk menciptakan percakapan yang nyaman dalam kegiatan pembelajaran, penggunaan kesantunan sangat diperlukan dalam berkomunikasi. Selama pandemi Covid-19 melanda, aktivitas pembelajaran telah digantikan dari pembelajaran tatap muka menjadi pembelajaran jarak jauh (dalam jaringan/ online). Namun, interaksi dan komunikasi dalam pembelajaran daring ini sangatlah berbeda dengan interaksi dan komunikasi dalam pembelajaran tatap muka. Oleh Karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis interaksi dari mahasiswa EFL dalam komunikasi di Group WhatsApp yang mana berfokus pada analisis strategi-strategi kesantunan yang ditunjukkan oleh mahasiswa. Partisipan dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester 6 dari jurusan Tadris Bahasa Inggris UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan yang tergabung dalam grup WhatsApp yang sama. Data dari penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui analisis dokumen dan semi-structured interview, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teori strategi kesantunan yang dikemukakan oleh Brown dan Levinson (1987). Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan terdapat tiga jenis strategi kesantunan yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa EFL dalam interaksi di WhatsApp Group. Strategi-strategi yang digunakan oleh siswa adalah strategi bald-on record, strategi kesantunan positif, dan strategi kesantunan negatif. Strategi kesantunan positif merupakan strategi yang paling banyak digunakan oleh mahasiswa EFL dalam interaksi di WhatsApp Group.

Kata Kunci: Strategi Kesantunan; Interaksi Online; Group WhatsApp; Pelajar EFL

ABSTRACT

To create a comfortable conversation in learning activities, it is necessary to use politeness in communication. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the learning activities had to be shifted from face-to-face learning to online learning activities. However, interactions and communications in face-to-face and online learning are certainly very different. Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to analyze the interactions of EFL undergraduate students in WhatsApp Group which focuses on analyzing the politeness strategies expressed by students. The participants of this study were the sixth-semester students of English Education Department UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan who joined the same WhatsApp group. The data were collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews which were then analyzed using the politeness strategies theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The findings from this study show there are three types of politeness strategies used by EFL undergraduate students in WhatsApp Group interactions. The strategies used by students are bald-on record strategies, positive politeness strategies, and negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategy was strategy that mostly used by EFL undergraduate students in WhatsApp Group interactions.

Keyword: **Politeness Strategies; Online Interaction; WhatsApp group; EFL Students.**

PREFACE

Praises and gratefulness are sent to Allah SWT who has poured His grace and gift and bestowed me guidance, health, and patience so that the writing process of my thesis entitle "**Politeness Strategies Expressed by EFL Undergraduate Students in Whatsapp Group Interactions**" can be completed. It is submitted to English Education Department, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to fulfill one of the requirements of the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree at English Education Department of Faculty of Education and Teacher Training UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. This proposed study can be accomplished because of many supports from several people. Therefore, on this occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

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1.1 Background of the Study

Since the pandemic hit the world of education in Indonesia, WhatsApp has become the applications that mostly chosen by teachers as an online learning tool. As state by Munir, Erlinda, & Afrinursalim (2021, p.324) "the use of WhatsApp in teaching activities is based on several reasons: (1) easy to use; (2) consume less of package data; and (3) has many useful features such as group, audio message, video call, and voice note". Although this application does not have features that are intended directly to assist and support learning, this application can facilitate the creation of online communication between teachers and students (Munir, Erlinda, Putra & Afrinursalim, 2021, p.169). WhatsApp chatting group can bridge this online learning activity because the feature allows several users to exchange messages in the same chat room. In addition, this is also relevant to the implementation of online teaching and learning activities which requires communication space between teachers and students.

As an English learner, communication is an importance part in learning activities because the more often English used in communication, the more fluent an EFL student will be in English. According to Nunan (1991) communication is needed as a basic skill in speaking where this is the most important process in learning a foreign language. Learners can be called a

good speaker if they can be actively involved in communicating with that language. Dharmadjaja & Tiatri (2021) stated that in the online learning interaction, teachers and students need at least one media to communicate and provide learning materials. WhatsApp as an online learning tool can help to maintain the communication between the EFLs in this distance learning (Sari & Putri, 2022). The existence of a group chatting on WhatsApp can help students to keep discussing and interacting with each other in practicing their English skills.

The WhatsApp Group discussion itself is a form of online learning interaction. It is a form of communication between individuals that occurs through technology, and the basis of this online learning interaction is an education system with independent learning methods where the teacher and students are not in the same space and time (Dharmadjaja & Tiatri, 2021). According to Moore (1989) there are three types of interactions in online learning, that is learner-content interaction, learner-instructor interaction, and learner-learner interaction. In addition, interaction through WhatsApp Group can be included in all forms of those online learning interactions. Through this application, students can carry out the learning activities either through learning materials that are sent in the file form, or hold discussions with the other learners, or ask some questions and responses from their teacher directly.

In online learning interactions, especially in learner-instructor and learner-learner interaction, politeness is also needed to create a good

relationship between teachers and EFL students and also between the EFL students themselves. As stated by Brown & Levinson (1987), in the social environment, politeness in the use of language is a common phenomenon. It refers to a person's ability to please others through how they treat their hearers. One of the politeness theories that are most frequently mentioned in many studies is Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategy. The politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) are divided into four types; there are 1) Bald-on record, 2) Positive politeness, 3) Negative politeness, and 4) Off-record strategy. Amanda, Herlina & Ratnawati (2021) said that politeness strategies are the first step to building good personal and social attitude. The existence of politeness strategies can be an effort for the EFL students to minimize conflict where this is intended to avoid rude utterances by considering the words spoken, thus it can be accepted by hearers (Selfia, *et al*, 2016).

As stated by Indriani (2021), sometimes an utterance can be polite in the native tongue, but in the target language, the utterance can have an impolite meaning. Therefore, to create a comfortable conversation in learning activities, it is necessary to use politeness strategies. Although WhatsApp for online learning is a good choice to bridge communication between EFL students, it is possible for some errors can occur in this communication. Amanda *et al*. (2021) stated that the use of this application in online interaction can also lead to misunderstandings. Since the communication in WhatsApp Group was occurs not face-to-face but through text messages, the

wrong interpretation of the utterance can lead to misunderstandings. Hence, in this case, politeness strategies had an important part in online communication. In order to communication can run smoothly, both speakers and hearers need to understand well the values of politeness in interaction.

Based on the explanation above, in this present study, the researcher wants to explore about how the EFL students use the politeness strategies in their daily communication, especially in WhatsApp group interaction. This study also investigates about how it can show the behavior of the EFL undergraduate students in this online learning communication.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows:

1. How did the EFL undergraduate students use the politeness strategies in WhatsApp group interaction?

2. What were the politeness strategies mostly used by the EFL undergraduate students?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding the term in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to the study as follows:

1.3.1 Politeness strategies are behaviors in interaction related to how the speaker treats the hearer's face (Martina, 2021).

1.3.2   Online interaction is a form of communication between individuals that occurs through technology (Muirhead & Juwah, 2004).

1.3.3   WhatsApp Group is one of the features in the WhatsApp application that is used to communicate with more than two people who are members of it (Munir *et al*., 2021).

1.3.4   EFL students are English learners who do not come from English-speaking countries (Peng, 2019).

1.4 Aims of the Research

This study aims to explore how politeness strategies used by the EFL undergraduate students, especially in WhatsApp group interactions and also this study will investigate their politeness behavior based on the strategy that are mostly used by students.

1.5 Significance of the Research

There are two significances of this research, as follow:

1.3.5   Theoretical significance: This study will explore the politeness strategies in EFL students' WhatsApp group interaction and contribute to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory and support theories related to the politeness strategies.

1.3.6   Practical significance: The findings from this study are expected to be useful for teachers to be able to become good role models in English discussion activities and also for students are expected to

better understand the importance of politeness in the process of teaching and learning English, especially in discussion activities.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1   Summary of The Findings

Based on the findings of the research, it can be seen that students use politeness strategies in their communication, especially in online learning activity through WhatsApp Group. According to the data from document analysis of students' conversations in WhatsApp Group, the researcher found that students applied three types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The details are as follows.

1.   The politeness strategies used by students in communicating through WhatsApp Group are bald-on record, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategies. These strategies are used by students in student-lecturer interaction, and each strategy is used by students in certain situations. The bald-on record strategy is used by students when they want to say something urgent or something that they think is very important. In addition, this strategy is also applied by students when communication is assignment-oriented. The researcher concluded that, in online learning communication, sometimes, students communicate using informal language such as saying

something directly/frankly and speaking to the point in certain situations.

Positive politeness strategies were also used by students in online learning communication through WhatsApp Group. Students used positive politeness strategies based on several conditions, there are: when students wanted to pay attention to hearers, wanted hearers to participate in the conversation, or equate knowledge and cooperate with hearers. In addition, students also used this strategy to show their agreement, offer or promise something, and express closeness by using group identity markers. The researcher concluded that students want to be polite by pleasing the positive faces of their interlocutors by paying attention to the conditions of hearers, trying to understand what they are interested in, and trying to be on the same side with them.

Students also commonly use negative politeness strategies in online learning through WhatsApp Groups. It showed that students did not want to disturb their hearers by using a question and apology in their utterances. The researcher concluded that sometimes students also show politeness by showing hesitation or unwillingness to disturb the negative faces of the hearers.

2. From the data that has been analyzed, it shows the strategy that mostly used by EFL undergraduate students in WhatsApp Group

interaction is positive politeness strategy. This strategy is mostly used by students in conducting communication with their lecturer during the learning process. This is in line with the data from semi-structured interview which shows that the students used the positive politeness strategy dominantly. The data shows that students use this strategy to show their respect for the hearers. In addition, they also said that this politeness strategy was using to build a good self-image, thus the hearers will feel comfortable when communicating with them. Moreover, the students said that the use of politeness in communication is an awareness of themselves with the aim of developing good relationships in communication.

5.2   Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to extend some recommendations for the further researchers who might be interested to examine the same aspect about the analysis of politeness strategies used by students in teaching learning activities. The researcher suggests to the further researchers to analyze the use of politeness strategies in face-to-face learning, and collect more data related to various interactions in face-to-face learning to get even more varied findings.

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