

Politeness in Imperative Derivatives within Declarative Forms: A Pragmatic Study of WhatsApp Statuses

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the principles and theories of politeness in language to enrich teaching materials for the speaking course in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Al Wasliyah LB. A qualitative research method with a descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected from various linguistic expert views on the principles and theories of politeness in language, obtained from print and electronic media, including books and accredited national and international scholarly journals. These data were analyzed and identified based on their original sources and references. The study highlights key theories of language politeness proposed by linguists, which are considered relevant and appropriate for integration into teaching materials. These include Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), Leech and Grice's cooperative principle (1993), and Rahardi's pragmatic politeness theory (2005). The findings demonstrate the potential of these theories to enhance the content and quality of the speaking course, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of politeness strategies in communication. This research contributes to the development of pedagogical resources, ensuring relevance and applicability in language education, particularly in fostering effective and polite communication skills among students.

Keywords: Politeness Strategy; Pragmatic Analysis; WhatsApp Statuses

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in human interaction, especially in spoken communication, which involves direct interaction and produces speech events and non-speech events. According to Sumarsono and Partana (2015:112), a speech event occurs when linguistic interaction takes place through one or more utterances, involving a speaker and a listener within a particular context, time, and place. While speech events are collective phenomena, speech acts are individual and psychological, shaped by the speaker's linguistic competence and situational awareness.

Politeness in language serves as an essential measure of effective communication, particularly for students in academic and social contexts. Research by Hidayat (2021:75) reveals that many students face challenges in adhering to the norms of linguistic politeness, often failing to recognize its significance in fostering positive interpersonal relationships. Linguistic politeness is not an innate characteristic but rather a skill that can be cultivated and developed through education and consistent practice. This aligns with Rahardi's (2017) assertion that politeness is a dynamic construct influenced by cultural and contextual factors.

In pragmatic contexts, imperative meanings in Indonesian are not limited to imperative constructions (commands) but can also be expressed through declarative (statements) or interrogative (questions) forms. Rahardi (2019) explains that in specific communication scenarios, speakers strategically employ declarative or interrogative constructions to convey imperative meanings while maintaining politeness. This adaptability reflects the speaker's effort to navigate social expectations and pragmatic goals effectively.

The rapid evolution of information technology has significantly impacted communication patterns, offering diverse tools for interaction. According to Kusumawati and Wibowo (2020), virtual communication has become dominant since the early 21st century, with various platforms facilitating instant and asynchronous communication. Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and others have reshaped how individuals interact, exchange information, and build connections, particularly in academic and professional settings.

WhatsApp has emerged as one of the most widely used communication tools in Indonesia. Suryani et al. (2022) note that WhatsApp ranks as the second most popular social media application, extensively utilized across diverse social and professional groups. Its features support both individual and group messaging, making it a preferred platform for academic communities, including students and lecturers. Through WhatsApp, users can share information, maintain social connections, and engage in collaborative activities, demonstrating its relevance in modern communication dynamics.

This study focuses on politeness strategies in imperative utterances within declarative constructions as observed in WhatsApp statuses. It explores the pragmatic choices made by users in conveying imperative meanings while adhering to politeness norms. The findings aim to provide insights into the intersection of linguistic pragmatics and digital communication, contributing to the broader understanding of language use in virtual spaces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatic Politeness Markers in Modern Communication

Recent research highlights the importance of politeness markers in communication, particularly in contemporary digital contexts. According to Kusuma (2020), politeness in communication involves strategic use of markers such as *please*, *kindly*, *let's*, and *hope*. These markers act as cues to soften directives, enhance respect, and maintain harmonious interactions. Kusuma's findings emphasize that pragmatic politeness is often indirect, ensuring the speaker's intent is communicated without imposing on the listener. Moreover, Nurhadi et al. (2021) identify that pragmatic politeness markers have evolved in digital communication, reflecting cultural and contextual sensitivity in modern language use.

Politeness and the Concept of Face in Communication

Pratiwi (2021) builds upon the concept of *face* in communication, describing it as an individual's public self-image that must be preserved during interactions. In contemporary pragmatics, the concept of face extends to include both positive face (the desire to be appreciated) and negative face (the desire to act without imposition). Politeness strategies, such as hedging, indirect speech, and formal address, are used to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs). Furthermore, Suryani and Andriani (2022) explored how digital platforms influence face preservation, showing that emojis, tone indicators, and strategic wording help protect both positive and negative face in text-based communication.

Politeness Principles in Digital Interaction

Modern studies by Santoso (2023) and Kusuma (2020) adapt the politeness principles proposed by earlier linguists to digital interactions. Santoso emphasizes six politeness principles relevant in virtual communication: wisdom, generosity, praise, humility, agreement, and sympathy. In parallel, Kusuma highlights that effective digital communication also relies on cooperative principles, such as clarity, relevance, and brevity, ensuring the intended message is conveyed without misinterpretation. These updated maxims reflect a nuanced approach to maintaining politeness in increasingly dynamic and asynchronous communication environments.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to describe and summarize various conditions, situations, or social phenomena in the community. The study focuses on speech acts used in WhatsApp status messages posted by lecturers. The primary data consists of WhatsApp status messages collected through documentation techniques. These messages serve as the research objects, representing real-world communication practices in a digital context.

Instruments and Procedures

The primary instrument in this research is the documentation technique, which involves capturing WhatsApp status messages through screenshots. The screenshots are treated as visual data and are carefully examined to ensure authenticity and relevance. These messages are then verified, classified, and organized based on the research problem formulation, creating a structured dataset for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from screenshots are analyzed through a systematic process of verification, classification, and interpretation. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns, categorizing speech acts, and drawing insights related to pragmatic politeness in WhatsApp statuses. The results are contextualized within the research objectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic phenomena under study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal various politeness strategies employed in WhatsApp statuses, demonstrating the users' ability to adapt language to maintain harmony, express emotions, and encourage social interaction. These strategies include the use of declarative forms to convey prohibitions, prayers, emotional states, and motivational support, all of which align with the principles of pragmatic politeness.

Prohibition Using Declarative Statements

One prominent strategy observed is the use of indirect speech to convey prohibitions. For example, in the utterance "*Teman-teman kalian jangan pulang dulu ya, tunggu dosennya sebentar lagi karena bentar lagi dosen masuk,*" the speaker uses the marker "*jangan*" (don't) to express a prohibition. This statement is indirect in tone, softening the command and preserving the listeners' negative face, as it avoids imposing forcefully while emphasizing mutual respect and

collaboration. By framing the prohibition as a collective responsibility, the speaker ensures that the directive is polite and considerate of social dynamics.

Declarative Utterances as Prayers or Expressions of Hope

Another politeness strategy is the use of declarative utterances as prayers or expressions of hope, reflecting positive face politeness. For instance, the status "*Bismillah*" serves as a declarative statement that embodies a prayer for divine protection and success. This utterance not only conveys the speaker's spiritual beliefs but also reinforces a sense of optimism and positivity, aligning with cultural norms of beginning activities with blessings. Similarly, the statement "*Lancarkan lah selalu rezeki ku ya Allah*" reflects a polite request for divine intervention, framed as a humble plea rather than a demand, highlighting the speaker's respect for higher powers.



Picture 1. Prayers or Expression of Hope

Expressing Emotional States Indirectly

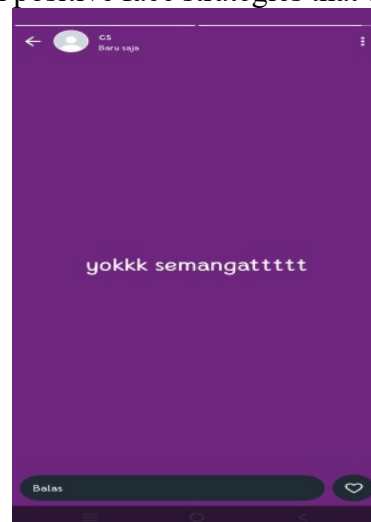
Politeness is also evident in expressing emotional states indirectly, allowing the speaker to maintain a level of dignity while sharing personal feelings. For example, the status "*Hancur kali buat malam ini*" conveys emotional distress in a declarative form, which softens the impact and makes it less confrontational. This strategy enables the speaker to share vulnerability while maintaining a polite distance, avoiding direct appeals that might burden the listener.



Picture 2. Expressing Emotional States Indirectly

Motivational Statements and Positive Politeness

Moreover, motivational statements serve as a form of positive politeness, fostering encouragement and solidarity. The phrase "*Yok semangat*" exemplifies this, as it provides emotional support and motivation. Such expressions of resilience and encouragement strengthen social bonds and highlight the speaker's intention to uplift others, aligning with positive face strategies that emphasize mutual goodwill.



Picture 3. Motivational Statements

Empathy and Acknowledgment of Struggles

Finally, empathy and understanding are reflected through the acknowledgment of struggles and offering support. For instance, the utterance "*Ga semangat lagi buat bangkit untuk bahagia*" depicts a loss of motivation, subtly inviting empathy and

support without imposing on the listener. This indirect approach respects the listener's autonomy while signaling a need for solidarity, aligning with politeness strategies aimed at preserving both positive and negative face.



Picture 4. *Empathy and Acknowledgement of Struggles*

This study sheds light on the intricate use of politeness strategies in WhatsApp statuses, emphasizing the interplay between language, social interaction, and pragmatics in digital communication. By focusing on declarative utterances used to convey prohibitions, prayers, emotional states, and motivational support, this research demonstrates how users adapt linguistic norms to virtual platforms. These findings highlight the creative use of language to maintain harmony and express intentions in a way that resonates with the audience.

Previous studies have examined politeness strategies in various contexts. Pratiwi (2021) explored politeness in students' imperative utterances, identifying how speakers use indirect strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs). Similarly, Kusuma (2020) investigated the role of politeness in online communication, emphasizing its importance in fostering mutual understanding. This study builds on these works by focusing on declarative utterances within WhatsApp statuses, offering a fresh perspective on how politeness strategies are adapted in asynchronous, digital settings where immediate feedback is absent.

The findings reveal that declarative utterances serve multiple pragmatic functions in WhatsApp statuses. For instance, prohibitive statements such as "*jangan pulang dulu ya*" exemplify how indirect speech is employed to maintain politeness while conveying a directive. This aligns with Suryani and Andriani's (2022) findings that indirectness helps preserve the listener's negative face in digital communication. Additionally, declarative prayers like "*Bismillah*" and "*lancarkan lah selalu*

rezekiku ya Allah" reflect positive politeness strategies, as they emphasize goodwill and shared cultural values.

This study also highlights the use of declarative forms to express vulnerability and emotional states. For example, statuses such as "*Hancur kali buat malam ini*" and "*Ga semangat lagi buat bangkit untuk bahagia*" convey distress and a need for empathy without directly imposing on the audience. This indirect approach aligns with Kusuma's (2020) argument that politeness strategies in digital communication often prioritize subtlety to maintain social harmony.

Furthermore, motivational statements such as "*Yok semangat*" illustrate positive politeness aimed at fostering solidarity and encouragement. These expressions align with cultural values that prioritize resilience and collective support. As Santoso (2023) noted, such statements strengthen social bonds and reflect the speaker's intention to inspire and uplift others.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on WhatsApp statuses as a medium for exploring politeness strategies. While traditional studies have largely focused on face-to-face or synchronous communication, this study reveals how politeness principles are recontextualized in short, asynchronous messages. WhatsApp statuses allow users to blend self-expression with social interaction, demonstrating linguistic creativity in crafting messages that resonate across diverse audiences.

These findings have significant implications for both theoretical and practical applications. Linguists and educators can use the insights to teach pragmatic competence, particularly for learners navigating cross-cultural or digital communication. Developers of social media platforms might consider incorporating features such as tone indicators or politeness suggestions to enhance user interaction. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of cultural norms in shaping politeness strategies, offering valuable perspectives for cross-cultural communication research.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The dataset is confined to WhatsApp statuses from a specific demographic (lecturers), which may not fully capture the diversity of users and contexts. Future research could expand this scope to include a broader range of users, such as students, professionals, and individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, integrating multimodal analysis that examines text, emojis, and images together would provide a more comprehensive understanding of politeness in digital communication.

In conclusion, this study bridges the gap between traditional politeness theories and their application in modern, digital contexts. By analyzing WhatsApp statuses, it offers unique insights into how politeness strategies evolve in response to the demands of virtual communication. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of language use in the digital age and pave the way for further research in this dynamic field.

CONCLUSION

his study provides valuable insights into the use of politeness strategies in WhatsApp statuses, highlighting the adaptation of traditional linguistic principles to digital communication. The findings reveal that users employ declarative utterances creatively to express prohibitions, prayers, emotional states, and motivational support, demonstrating linguistic flexibility and pragmatics in virtual interactions. These strategies, including indirect speech, positive politeness, and the use of cultural markers, help maintain harmony, preserve face, and foster solidarity among users. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by focusing on WhatsApp statuses, an underexplored medium that combines self-expression and social interaction. It bridges the gap between classical politeness theories and their contemporary applications, showcasing how users navigate the nuances of asynchronous communication to achieve pragmatic goals. The research underscores the importance of cultural norms and shared values in shaping politeness strategies, particularly in a digital context where brevity and subtlety are crucial. While the study has provided significant theoretical and practical implications, such as enhancing pragmatic competence in education and guiding the design of communication tools, it is not without limitations. The scope of the dataset, limited to lecturers' statuses, and the focus on textual analysis highlight the need for further exploration. Future studies could include a more diverse demographic and integrate multimodal analyses to capture the full spectrum of politeness in digital communication.

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