

## Compliance and Violation of Politeness Principles in Student-Lecturer Interactions at the University of Mataram: A Pragmatic Study

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and describe the forms of compliance and violation of politeness principles in student-lecturer interactions at the University of Mataram from a pragmatic perspective. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researcher collected primary data in the form of students' utterances. Data were gathered through observation, recording, and note-taking techniques, with the researcher serving as the main instrument. Validity was ensured through theoretical triangulation, and data analysis was conducted using pragmatic and contextual methods. The results showed that out of 52 utterances, 48 complied with politeness principles and only 4 violated them. These findings suggest that students predominantly adhere to politeness norms, both in direct and online communication with lecturers. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of language use in academic settings and offers practical implications for fostering respectful interaction in higher education.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every day, humans are always involved in communication activities or interactions with others. One important element in this communication is language. Language serves as a tool to interact and communicate between humans. In the social context, language plays a very important role in the communication process. Every communication sends information that includes feelings, thoughts, ideas, intentions, and emotions.

Language has a strong relationship with communication. From language, humans can express their intentions and goals to the interlocutor in a speech. Language is learned by individuals to interact, communicate, think according to their wishes, and express themselves (Suhendi, 2017).

Language serves as a cohesive instrument and is crucial in building positive relationships among individuals, as it reflects their thoughts, actions, and character. When adjusting to a particular social environment, it is common to choose the most appropriate language based on the circumstances and context.

Indonesian has proven its ability to unite people with different cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds (Mustakim, 1994:14). Only a few individuals consider Indonesian as their “mother tongue”, usually they come from families that use various regional languages. This signifies the important role of Indonesian in social life. In interacting with people of different ages, it is very important to use polite language. The expression conveyed to the interlocutor is always related to the aspect of politeness (Nisja, 2009: 478).

Politeness is closely related to the concepts of ‘politeness,’ ‘ethics,’ ‘respect,’ and ‘appropriate behavior’. Politeness includes appropriate actions, suggesting that it relates not only to language elements but also to values reflected in nonverbal behavior. Politeness relates language to various social elements, similar to the role of behavioral norms and ethical principles. In communication, language politeness is not only the main impetus for speakers to speak, but also acts as a regulating factor that ensures conversations can take place smoothly, effectively, and pleasantly.

Politeness in language has an important role in social life. It is reflected in the way we convey ourselves through verbal signals or etiquette in communication. Language choice in interaction is influenced by prevailing cultural norms, and is more than just the conveyance of thoughts. As such, language use needs to be in tune with the cultural elements in the society in which it is used.

Often, people do not realize that they rarely pay attention to the grammar used in daily interactions as the main communication tool. The use of correct grammar in communication is expected to make the interaction between the speaker and the listener smoother. By emphasizing politeness in language, one can maintain self-dignity and show respect to speech partners, so that the communication process runs smoothly.

Language politeness is realized in communication through verbal cues or linguistic ethics. These linguistic ethics must be in line with the cultural values that exist in the community where the language is used. Communicating in a polite way creates effective communication. The use of polite, friendly, clear,

direct, and structured language reflects the goodness of the speaker's character. Language activities require the principle of politeness.

This research uses pragmatics theory as the main foundation. The choice of pragmatics theory is based on the study of this science which observes the structure of language from the external aspect, namely how language politeness is applied in communication (Wijana, 1996: 1). In general, people tend to prefer to express their opinions in a polite way rather than impolitely (Leech, 2014: 38). Thus, every individual wants to show a polite and good personality, which can be applied in the academic environment.

In this academic community, social interaction between students and lecturers occurs continuously in the communication process. Students show respect and foster positive relationships with their lecturers, reflecting their politeness in interactions that aim to build effective communication. Social interactions in the academic speech community between students and lecturers, consistently adhere to the principles of language politeness. Politeness needs to be applied in formal situations because in these conditions we are required to use polite language in interacting with others. By speaking politely, we show respect for the interlocutor.

At the University of Mataram, students come from diverse cultural and regional backgrounds, shaping their communication styles. Understanding how students apply politeness strategies in their communication with lecturers is crucial for promoting mutual respect and positive academic relationships. This research seeks to explore how students adhere to or violate politeness principles in real academic discourse, using the pragmatic framework developed by Geoffrey Leech.

This study is expected to offer a general overview or evidence regarding students' application of linguistic politeness in their interactions with lecturers. Furthermore, it may serve as a valuable reference for students engaging in linguistic research from a pragmatic perspective.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***Theory of Politeness***

This study is based on the theory of politeness proposed by Geoffrey Leech (2014), which includes ten maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, sympathy, obligation to apologize, obligation to respond to apologies, option, and feeling. These maxims guide individuals in structuring communication to avoid conflict and maintain harmony.

Previous research has addressed politeness in various settings. However, few studies have focused specifically on student-lecturer interactions within the context of Indonesian higher education. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how students at the University of Mataram implement or disregard politeness principles in both spoken and written communication.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The primary data consisted of students' utterances during interactions with lecturers, while

secondary data included relevant literature supporting the theoretical and analytical framework. Data were collected using a listening-based method, involving passive observation, audio recording, and systematic note-taking in natural academic settings. These techniques enabled the researcher to capture spontaneous language use during real interactions. The researcher also acted as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation. To ensure the validity of the findings, theoretical triangulation was applied by referring to multiple pragmatic theories. The data were analyzed using pragmatic and contextual interpretation to identify compliance and violations based on Leech's politeness maxims.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Compliance and Violation of Politeness Principles in Student-Lecturer Interactions at the University of Mataram*

#### a. Compliance with Politeness Principles

Compliance with the politeness principle in students language when interacting with lecturers at the University of Mataram can be observed in several of Leech's politeness maxims, including the following:

##### 1) Tact Maxim

The following are the tact maxims in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 1, Data Code: Pm. MKar. 1

(M) : *Assalamualaikum pak, apakah kami sudah bisa memulai presentasinya pak?*

(D) : *Silakan bisa dimulai.*

Context: a student asks his lecturer to start the presentation.

The utterance in the data above shows that the speaker (student) complies with the tact maxim by reducing losses and giving advantages to the speech partner (lecturer). This is reflected in the utterance "*apakah kami sudah bisa*", which shows that the speaker does not impose his will. If given permission, he will start the presentation, but if not, he will respect the lecturer's decision. In addition, the pronunciation of the greeting "*Assalamualaikum pak*" at the beginning of the sentence shows respect for the speaking partner. Thus, the sentences used by students are considered polite and in accordance with the tact maxims.

##### 2) Generosity Maxim

The following are the maxims of generosity in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 24, Data Code: Pm. MKder. 3

(M) : *Izin bertanya ibu, untuk pengumpulan tugas UAS, dikumpulkan pada jadwal UAS ya bu?*

(D) : *Iya, tolong ketua tingkat untuk membuatkan link pengumpulan tugas.*

(M) : *Baik ibu, nanti tiang buat linknya.*

Context: a student who is willing to help his lecturer to create a link to submit the UAS assignment.

The utterance in the data above shows that the speaker (student) complies with the maxim of generosity by reducing the benefit for oneself and prioritizing the benefit of the other party (lecturer). Compliance with the maxim of generosity is reflected in the sentence "*Baik ibu, nanti tiang buat linknya*" spoken by the

speaker, which shows an attitude of generosity with a willingness to help other parties. This proves that the speaker prioritizes the benefits of the other party. Thus, the speaker has fulfilled the maxim of generosity.

### 3) Approbation Maxim

The following is the approbation maxims in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 28, Data Code: Pm. MPj. 1

(D) : Pertemuan minggu depan kalian belajar mandiri karena saya ada tugas ke Jakarta.

(M) : *Baik bapak, terima kasih informasinya.*

Context: A student compliments the lecturer for providing information about the next lecture.

The above data is a approbation maxim in the student's speech when interacting with lecturers, shown by the speech partner (student) to the speaker (lecturer) in the form of a sentence of praise with the pronunciation "*terima kasih informasinya*" and the speech partner responds using polite language. The response given by the speech partner has complied with the approbation maxim because it gives praise to others.

### 4) Modesty Maxim

The following are the maxims of modesty in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 31, Data Code: Pm. MKrh. 1

(D) : Kenapa terlambat?

(M) : *Mohon maaf, rumah saya jauh dan tidak punya motor Pak. Tadi tunggu angkutan umum untuk berangkat ke kampus.*

(D) : Kenapa tidak berangkat lebih awal.

(M) : Sudah pagi-pagi pak, tapi macet.

(D) : Lain kali jangan terlambat lagi ya.

(M) : Enggih pak. Saya usahakan pak. terima kasih pengertiannya pak.

Context: a student informs the lecturer of his situation when he is late for class. The utterance is spoken in a low tone.

The utterance in the data above shows compliance with the maxim of modesty, because it reduces self-praise and adds self-deficiencies, as seen in the utterance conveyed by students to lecturers using polite and humble language. This can be seen from the expression "*mohon maaf*" before entering the topic of conversation, followed by the sentence "*rumah saya jauh dan tidak punya motor Pak. Tadi tunggu angkutan umum untuk berangkat ke kampus*" as a form of honesty in admitting their limitations without feeling embarrassed. This attitude reflects the application of the maxim of modesty by recognizing one's shortcomings.

### 5) Agreement Maxim

The following are the maxims of agreement in students speech when interacting with lecturers;

Data: 33, Data Code: Pm. MKsp. 2

(M) : Izin bertanya pak. Untuk pertemuan selanjutnya apakah dilaksanakan daring atau luring pak?

(D) : Luring ya.

(M) : *Nggih pak.*

Context: a student who agrees to a lecture with his lecturer.

The utterance in the data above shows compliance with the maxim of agreement, which is reflected in the students' utterance "*Nggih pak*" as a form of agreement and politeness to the lecturer. This indicates that students comply with the maxim of agreement by reducing their own benefits and maximizing the benefits of other parties during the conversation.

#### 6) Sympathy Maxim

The following is the maxim of sympathy in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 45, Data Code: Pm. MKsim. 2

(M1) : *Assalamualaikum wr.wb. selamat pagi ibu, mohon maaf mengganggu waktunya. Apakah hari ini ibu terima bimbingan?*

(D) : *Qodarullah sejak sabtu saya masih kurang sehat. Insyallaah besok semoga baik.*

(M1) : *Amin bu. Semoga lekas sembuh.*

(M2) : *Nggih bu. Semoga lekas diberi kesembuhan bu, amin. (emoticon)*

Context: Spoken by students to lecturers when they want to guide their thesis.

The speech partner informed that he could not guide because he was still unwell. The speaker replied with sympathy while giving a prayer.

The utterance in the data above illustrates the fulfillment or compliance of the maxim of sympathy. The maxim of sympathy emphasizes the importance of speakers showing attention and sympathy for the interlocutor. The indicators that are obeyed in the data include giving sympathy to the interlocutor and using polite words. Sentences such as "*Amin, Bu. Semoga lekas sembuh*" and "*Nggih, Bu. Semoga lekas diberi kesembuhan, Bu, amin*" is a form of expression of empathy, attention, and concern conveyed by the speaker (student) to the speaking partner (lecturer) who is sick, with the hope of a speedy recovery. In addition, speakers also use polite language when talking to speech partners.

#### 7) Obligation to Apologize

The following is the maxim of obligation to apologize in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 48, Data Code: Pm. MKMM. 1

(D) : *Silakan diambil. Saya di ruangan.*

(M) : *Mohon maaf sebelumnya ibuk, saya tidak bisa ambil tadi pagi, karena saya sedang di lotim (emoticon)*

(D) : *Iya gpp sy sabtu minggu di Kamry.*

(M) : *Enggih ibuk (emoticon)*

Context: a student who apologizes to the lecturer when he cannot take the results of the thesis consultation in his room because he is in a distant area.

The utterance in the data above shows compliance with the obligation to apologize maxim. This maxim requires speakers to reduce apologies for themselves and focus more on apologizing to others. That is, the speaker should prioritize apologizing to the interlocutor. Indicators that are considered include giving more frequent apologies to speech partners and using polite language. The sentence "*Mohon maaf sebelumnya, Ibu, saya tidak bisa mengambil tadi pagi karena*

*saya sedang di Lotim*” is a form of expression of apology conveyed by the speaker (student) to the speech partner (lecturer). In addition, speakers also use polite language when talking to speech partners.

#### 8) Obligation to Respond to Apologies

The following presents the maxim of the obligation to respond to apologies in students' utterances when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 50, Data Code: Pm. MKTMM. 2

(M) : Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Selamat siang ibu. Izin bertanya ibu, untuk pengambilan skripsi di rumah ibu, tiang bisa mengambilnya pada pukul berapa ibu. (emoticon)

(D) : Mohon maaf belum selesai saya baca. Qodarullah maafin ya besok saya kabarin lagi.

(M) : *Nggih ibu tidak apa-apa, iya ibu.*

Context: a student who responds to the lecturer's apology because he has not finished reading the thesis which should have results to be revised. The utterance is spoken in a low tone.

The utterance in the data above also demonstrates compliance with the maxim of the obligation to respond to apologies. This maxim emphasizes that apologies from others should be downplayed, while one's own responses should be amplified. Thus, speakers are expected to show humility by providing responses or apologies to their interlocutors, while setting aside personal interests. The observed indicator is accepting apologies with humility and using polite language. The sentence “Nggih, Ibu, tidak apa-apa, iya Ibu” represents an expression of graciousness from the speaker (student) toward the interlocutor (lecturer) in accepting the apology. The speaker also uses polite language toward the interlocutor.

#### 9) Option Maxim

The following are the maxims of opinion in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 51, Data Code: Pm. MPn. 1

(M) : *Ibu (mengangkat tangan), saya mewakili teman-teman untuk tugas UAS kami kumpulkan di google drive agar lebih mudah sesuai saran ibu, jika UAS kami sudah terkumpul, nanti kami kirimkan link tugasnya. Bagaimana pendapat ibu?*

(D) : Baik, waktu pengerjaan UAS seminggu, minggu depan kirimkan saya linknya.

(M) : *Nggih bu.*

Context: a student who agrees with the opinion suggested by the lecturer by weakening his own opinion.

The utterance in the data above shows the compliance to the opinion maxim. This maxim requires speakers to lower their opinions or judgments of themselves and others to be in line with the agreement. Speakers tend to reduce personal opinions for the sake of mutual understanding. The indicator that is obeyed is by weakening the opinion of the interlocutor and using words that please the interlocutor. The sentence “*Saya mewakili teman-teman untuk tugas UAS kami kumpulkan di Google Drive agar lebih mudah sesuai saran ibu*” shows a decrease in one's own opinion, because the speakers (students) follow the lecturer's advice.

In addition, the use of words that please the speech partner is also reflected in this speech.

#### 10) Feeling Maxim

The following are the feeling maxims in students speech when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 52, Data Code: Pm. MPr. 1

(D) : Baik, sebelumnya ibu ucapkan terima kasih kepada kalian karena telah mengikuti perkuliahan dari awal sampai sekarang dengan baik. Ibu juga minta maaf jika ada salah kata selama ibu mengajar ya

(M) : *Seharusnya kami ini yang berterima kasih ibu karena sudah mengajarkan kami dengan sabar dan maaf ibu jika ada kesalahan kami selama di kelas ibu. Semoga ibu bisa mengajar kami di semester depan hehe.*

Context: spoken by students to lecturers because they have taught patiently and hope to be taught in the next semester. The utterance is spoken in a happy tone.

The utterance in the data above shows compliance with the maxim of feelings, which emphasizes reducing unpleasant or negative feelings towards speech partners and increasing positive feelings. Speakers are expected to convey as much pleasure as possible and avoid negative feelings. Indicators of compliance with this maxim can be seen in the expression that gives a feeling of pleasure to the interlocutor and the use of words that please the interlocutor. The sentence "*Seharusnya kami ini yang berterima kasih, Ibu, karena sudah mengajarkan kami dengan sabar dan semoga Ibu bisa mengajar kami di semester depan, hehe*" is an expression of gratitude and hope conveyed by the speaker (student) to the speech partner (lecturer) for the teaching given with patience, as well as the use of language that pleases the speech partner.

#### b. Violation of Politeness Principle

Violations of language politeness by students in interactions with lecturers at the University of Mataram are also evident in several politeness maxims proposed by Leech, including the following:

##### 1) Tact Maxim

The following is an example of the tact maxim in students utterances when interacting with lecturers.

Data: 21, Data Code: Pl. MKar. 1

(M) : Assalamualaikum wr.wb. mohon maaf mengganggu waktunya bu. Izin bertanya ibu. *Saya Zulfahmi ingin meminta tanda tangan hari ini, bisa tidak bu?* mengingat jadwal yudisium minggu depan. Terima kasih. (emoticon)

(D) : Waalaikumsalam. Iya silakan temui saya di ruang dosen pukul 09:00.

(M) : Baik ibu, terima kasih.

Context: A student asking their academic advisor for a signature in order to register for the graduation assessment (yudisium).

The speech event in this data indicates a violation of linguistic politeness in terms of the tact maxim, as reflected in the speaker's (the student's) utterance that fails to provide alternatives to the interlocutor (the lecturer) and comes across as pressing. This is evident in the sentence "*Saya Zulfahmi ingin meminta tanda tangan hari ini, bisa tidak bu?*", in which the speaker gives limited options, leaving the interlocutor with only a yes-or-no response. Therefore, the utterance violates the

tact maxim because it does not follow the principle of minimizing benefit to the speaker and maximizing benefit to the hearer.

## 2) Agreement Maxim

The following excerpt illustrates the agreement maxim in a student's utterance during an interaction with a lecturer.

Data: 42, Data Code: Pl. MKsp. 2

(M) : Assalamualaikum wr.wb. selamat pagi ibu, mohon maaf mengganggu waktunya. Apakah hari ini ibu terima bimbingan?

(D) : Iya pukul 10:00 insyaallah.

(M) : Baik ibu.

(D) : Saya sudah di ruangan.

(M) : *Nggih bu, mohon maaf masih di perjalanan* (emoticon)

(D) : Hanya 1 yang mau bimbingan? Di ruangan ada rapat. Taruh di meja saja ya.

(M) : nggih ibu.

Context: A student breaks an agreement with their lecturer regarding a scheduled thesis supervision session.

The utterance in this data reflects a violation of linguistic politeness in terms of the agreement maxim, as seen when the speaker (the student) fails to honor the agreement previously made with the interlocutor (the lecturer), as indicated by the statement "*Nggih bu, mohon maaf masih di perjalanan.*" The speaker was expected to be prepared and to comply with the agreement that had been established with the interlocutor. The speaker's failure to fulfill the agreement may lead to a loss of trust from the interlocutor, and such mismatch can affect communication. Ideally, had the speaker adhered to the agreement, this violation would not have occurred.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that students at the University of Mataram generally demonstrate strong adherence to politeness principles in their communication with lecturers, whether through direct interaction or digital platforms. Out of 52 utterances, 48 were found to align with Leech's maxims, while only 4 represented violations.

The results reflect a broader academic culture that values respect, empathy, and cooperation. Students are encouraged to maintain and strengthen their politeness strategies in all forms of communication, including classroom discussions, consultations, and online exchanges.

## FURTHER STUDY

Future researchers are advised to conduct similar studies in different academic settings or cultural contexts. Such research may offer comparative insights into the role of politeness in maintaining academic and professional relationships across disciplines and societies.

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