Application of Language Politeness in Learning Activities at School

Kemal Alief
Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan

Nashruddin
STKIP Muhammadiyah Barru, Indonesia

Abstract

Language politeness really needs to be shown and maintained in society because it is a characteristic of the human in all nations. Language politeness needs to be applied in all aspects of life. One of the important places to apply language politeness is in teaching and learning activities in schools. This research was conducted in a junior high school in Lahore city. Participants were 30 students of the second grade who were involved in learning activities with a teacher. The researchers found that in learning activities, all positive elements are very important to be applied. This is important because teaching and learning activities are the spearhead in instilling positive values from teachers to students, students to teachers, and students to students. For this reason, teaching and learning activities or processes should be able to run with full politeness which is manifested through the language used. Language politeness in teaching and learning activities will have a positive impact on students' views of teachers, teachers to students, and students to students.

Corresponding author:
Kemal Alief, Hazara University Mansehra, Dhodial, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 21120, Pakistan
Email: aliefkemalabdou@hu.edu.pk

INTRODUCTION

One aspect of the noble value of life that is owned by humans is in the use of language. According to Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2017) almost all ethnic groups in the world have a different language. This difference has been anticipated by all people. Thus Kelman (2018) also commented that, this language should be able to unite the people and become a representative of the introduction of national identity.

In religious life, there are many things that explain how important it is to speak well (Han, 2018; Krylova & Renkovskaya, 2020). If someone cannot speak well, it would be better if that person is silent. By following these recommendations, the hope is that no party will feel disadvantaged when speaking activities take place. According to Pal Singh (2018) this does not mean that humans should be more silent, but humans should be wiser in choosing the language and words to be spoken.

Seeing the above condition, it can be illustrated how important it is to maintain politeness in language. However, language politeness is currently felt to have begun to fade. In the community, this has been seen very clearly, such as communication activities between children and parents, students and teachers, or between two persons who do not know each other in communication activities. This is contrary to the human culture who highly uphold politeness in various aspects. For this reason, this politeness needs to be revived in various forms and facilities. One of these facilities is language activities.

There are many ways that can be done to revive language politeness patterns. One way is through teaching and learning activities, in which there is a lot of interaction. The interactions that may be found are the interactions between teachers and students and students with students. In this interaction, language activities are very possible to appear, because the nature of language is as a tool for interacting.

Language is an activity carried out by humans in an effort to communicate (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018; Zhou & Wei, 2018). Communication that goes between speakers requires mutual understanding between the two. In this process there is an interaction between the speaker and the partner. Interaction is an activity that can be called a reciprocal communication activity. Reciprocal communication can take place if there is an exchange of information between participants, so that participants change roles on an ongoing basis in the ongoing interaction process. The change in roles that took place in this study was that students and teachers should be able to take place smoothly and not cause misunderstandings. For this reason, everything related to grammar should be understood between teachers and students (Goh, Leong, Kasmin, Hii, & Tan, 2017; Koul, Lerdpornkulrat, & Poondej, 2018).

One thing that can be underlined is that nowadays there is a tendency to find a decline in politeness in language, especially in the imperative form. It is influenced by many factors. The inputs received and the samples found are some of the influencing factors. In addition, according to Zhu and Bresnahan (2018) and Masjedi and Paramasivam (2018) environmental factors and the media also contributed to a tendency to decrease the level of politeness in language.

Based on the above review, the present research focuses on investigating the application of language politeness in the learning process. In the analysis, examples of data regarding speech found during the learning process are presented. Examples of data taken include utterances between teachers and students and students and teachers. The atmosphere behind the speech will certainly be described in the context of the speech. Based on the description of the background of the problem above, the formulation of the problem in this study is how to apply language politeness in learning activities at school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language politeness is very important to be owned and applied by students and teachers. Polite means smooth and good, namely good manners and behavior (Culpeper, Haugh, & Kádár, 2017; Kádár & Zhang, 2019). Based on this understanding, polite is not only interpreted from one side, but from several sides, namely language and behavior (verbal and nonverbal). Language politeness can be seen as an attempt to avoid conflicts between speakers and speech partners. Thus, politeness and politeness are assumptions that arise from the side of the speaker or the speech partner.

Many linguists talk about politeness. Among these experts are Lakoff (1976), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987), and Fraser (2010). Lakoff (1976) distinguishes politeness based on rules, while Fraser (2010) provides an understanding of politeness in terms of strategy. For Fraser, politeness is a property associated with speech and in this case according to the listener, the speaker does not exceed his rights or does not deny fulfilling his obligations.

Language politeness can be done in at least five methods as supported by a research conducted by Nashruddin and Al-Obaydi (2021). Those five methods are:

1. Everyone needs to apply politeness principle in language, which is a principle that seeks to maximize wisdom, profit, respect, and praise to others, and vice versa minimize these things to oneself.

2. Language politeness must avoid taboo words in communicating. The prevailing norms related to these taboo words are indeed different from one region to another. However, in some examples of cases also found similarities. For example, in most society, words that have associations with sex are usually considered taboo words.

3. In an effort to avoid the use of taboo words, the use of euphemisms is highly recommended. Euphemism is a subtle expression as a substitute for all words that are considered taboo. Euphemisms are done so that language is maintained and polite.

4. Politeness can also be achieved by using honorific word choices. Honorific is an expression of respect for speaking and greeting other people. The use of honorifics is, of course, by looking at the elements of the politeness effect caused.

5. Politeness can also be achieved through the application of indirect speech acts. This speech act is a type of utterance that is conveyed by using a different sentence mode from the meaning of the sentence.

The learning process is a process in which there are goals to be achieved. In simple terms, learning is defined as modifying or reinforcing behavior through experience (Cheng, 2017; Yasmin, Sohail, Sarkar, & Hafeez, 2017). In learning activities, goals are indeed important. However, there is something more important than just the result, namely the learning process itself. In the ongoing process, there will be many lessons to be learned. In the process there will also be many examples and models to follow. In line with that opinion, Al-Obaydi, Doncheva, and Nashruddin (2021) found that it is almost certain that in the learning process the teacher becomes a role that is expected to be able to provide an example to students. That way, the things teachers do should be good things so they can be seen and imitated directly by students.

One of the things teachers can do is to organize the language used in the learning process (Acharya, 2019). Teachers should be able to provide examples in the form of using polite language. The politeness of language shown by the teacher in interacting with students will lead to a good response from students so that good communication occurs (Fegher, Kimathi, & Olouch-Suleh, 2020; Zheng, Bhagat, Zhen, & Zhang, 2020). Davis, Barrueco, and Perry (2021) added that good communication will support the maximum achievement of learning objectives. However, currently a lot of deviations are found in teachers' speech to students. Teachers as the center of attention in the classroom sometimes raise their ego and show it through the language used.

A research conducted by Gerrard (2020) shows that people generally tend to use imperative sentences directly to convey orders. Another study was conducted by Furkatovna and Mekhrojevna (2021) regarding verbal and nonverbal politeness in imperative speech of junior high school students in Language Learning provides several conclusions. The conclusions given are (1) there are verbal and nonverbal imperative speech politeness in the learning process, (2) there are verbal and nonverbal imperative verbal politeness principles in the learning process, and (3) there are deviations from verbal and nonverbal politeness principles in imperative speech in the learning process.

A study on language politeness has also been carried out by Wang (2021). The notes given by the researcher include four things. The four notes are (1) communication is the main thing in conveying messages, to be able to convey messages properly it needs to be done politely, (2) the learning process carried out by teachers must be based on the rules and procedures for polite delivery, both content, language, how to convey, as well as mimics and movements, (3) students in following lessons to maintain good attitudes, and polite speech both to fellow friends and to teachers, and (4) the key to success in learning is understanding between teachers and students in learning transactions, namely by using polite attitudes and speech.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative. Data were collected in the form of words or language in speech activities in classroom learning. For this reason, the current study applied a qualitative descriptive method. The source of data in this research was learning activities at a junior high school in the 2nd year at Lahore city.

The data collected was in the form of utterances between a teacher and 30 students that occurred in their interactions. To get the data, the technique used by the researchers was in the form of recording and observation. The researchers used recordings to get data during the learning process. By using records, the data obtained was direct. After getting the data in the form of a recording, the researchers then continued to observe the results of the recording and then the speech data contained in it was transcribed.

The researchers continued by making observations in the classroom. Data analysis techniques used were data display, data reduction, and data analysis. The researchers presented data in the form of speech that occurred between the teacher and students or vice versa. Then, the researchers sorted the data to be analyzed and continues by discussing using the presented theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data found, it can be seen that there are utterances that comply with the politeness principle but there are also some utterances that do not comply with this principle. In the data presented in table 1 below, it can be seen the teacher's efforts to use polite language.

Table 1. Dialog 1

Teacher – Student	The teacher presents a discourse about respecting parents to explain material related to the rights and obligations of parents and children.	a) "You all still have your parents, don't you?"
Student – Teacher		b) "Yes, Mooom…!"
Teacher – Student		c) "You know what to do if you still have parents, right?"
Student – Teacher		d) "Yes, we know, Mooom…!"

In the dialogue above, it can be seen that the teacher tries to obey the politeness principle. The teacher uses a choice of language that is quite capable of showing the teacher's wisdom by asking students about their condition, still have parents or not. Based on the questions asked, the teacher actually does not want to collect data on the parents of students but wants to convey that they should take care and respect to their parents while they still have parents. Based on that it can also be said that the teacher chooses to use indirect speech form. The teacher does not ask students to do acts of filial piety to parents with direct command sentences but using other forms. The teacher chooses to use interrogative sentences to convey the message that actually contains imperative meaning.

In commanding, the teacher also does not seem to force everything he wants. In the speech used, there is no coercive effort, but an attempt to invite students to think analytically and logically. In the teacher's speech, there is no use of taboo words. The utterances spoken by the teacher are the implementation of language politeness. By using those utterances, the communication activity becomes free from coercion.

However, the teacher's efforts to invite students to think analytically and logically did not get very good response from students. This can be seen from the answers given by students and their expressions when giving answers. Students seem to give answers arbitrarily and with expressions that look lazy. The expression "Mooom….." with a fairly long tone indicates that they basically do not like to be asked such a question. More for the next question "You know what to do if you still have parents, right?" Students answer with long tones and lazy expression so that it gives the impression that the question actually does not need to be answered.

Table 2. Dialog 2

| Teacher – Student | The teacher asks students to attend an activity to commemorate the country national ceremony | a. "The current students are lazy, it's just a ceremony, if they are not forced, and are not afraid of reducing scores, many don't want to attend, what do you want to be in the future?" (The class was silent for a moment, then the teacher continued) |
| | | b. "Can today's youth excel like the youths of the past? Many can't, I am sure". |

In the data in table 2 above, the context is that the teacher is asking students to attend the flag ceremony in commemoration of the day of country national ceremony. Seeing the context described, the teacher can actually give orders using imperative sentences by saying "Tomorrow everyone must attend the national ceremony!" However, the teacher does not use direct speech to give an effect to students. The teacher prefers to use speech that shows threats and emotions. This is based on the reality and experience in previous years that students preferred not to attend the ceremony because no sanctions (for those who were absent) or rewards (for those who attended) they received.

In such case, it can be said that the culture of wanting to be "feared" has become a part of students' self. This culture is not expected to become the students' character. Because basically language is a reflection of the human mind, so if the teacher issues such language, it will reflect the attitude and character of the teacher. Teachers should provide other expressions that further improve students' analytical and logical thinking skills.

In this speech, the teacher indirectly has have a slightly condescending thought on students. It can be seen in the utterance "what do you want to be in the future?" It has given the impression that students will not be successful in their lives because they do not have the fighting power. It is proven by the behavior of those who attend the national ceremony only with the threat of score reducing. Likewise with utterance "Can today's youth excel like the youths of the past?". This question actually requires students' answer, but the teacher has her own answer "Many can't, I am sure" that reflects her view of her students.

Based on the politeness principle, the teacher's utterance can be classified as having violated the agreement maxim, generosity maxim, appreciation maxim, and sympathy maxim. In this case the teacher did not show sympathy for the condition of the students because the teacher made speeches that demean students. It would actually be more polite if the teacher provided examples that could be analyzed by students. For example, the teacher could compare the situation of youth in the past with youth today from various sides. That way, the teacher also provides many opportunities for students to provide logical and analytical views so that students can provide conclusions on their current situation.

Table 3. Dialog 3

Student – Teacher	The teacher is explaining the material and suddenly one of the students speaks.	a) "The time is up, Moooom!"
Teacher – Student		b) "Then, what if the time is up?"
		c) "I explained earlier but you all don't want to be silent, yes, this is your risk if our lesson has to pass the time" (the teacher speaks with a rather high intonation, because previously the students were noisy when the teacher explained the subject material.)

The context of the speech in table 3 is a student is reminding the teacher about the end of the lesson and it is time for the teacher to close the lesson. The student suddenly said that because he saw that the lesson time had actually ended but the teacher was still enthusiastic in explaining the material. In this condition, the student actually did not use direct speech, he used indirect speech act. However, the student's word choice was impolite. That was what then led to a negative reaction from the teacher, namely the teacher asked back "What if the time is up?". The teacher's feedback was a reaction unexpected by the student. In addition, the teacher continued her utterance about the reason for continuing the lesson even though the lesson time has actually ended. The teacher said "I explained earlier but you all don't want to be silent, yes, this is your risk if our lesson has to pass the time".

When viewed from the use of words, the teacher's utterances can be categorized in direct speech sentences. The teacher immediately conveys the reason without choosing to use parables that show the point. In the politeness principle, this is categorized as violating the modesty maxim. Modesty maxim requires the speaker to maximize praise for others and minimize praise for himself. In dialog 3, the teacher demeans students through utterances that reveal their mistakes, causing consequences that they must bear.

Based on the modesty maxim, the teacher can actually say "Alright, thank you for reminding us, but we still have to continue because the material I present has not been completed due to several obstacles, and you know one of them, and I hope you realize it". However, it needs to be understood that the psychological condition of the teacher who is already angry because the students cannot be invited to cooperate. The teacher feels that if they have to exceed the time, it is all because the students themselves are not cooperative in the teaching and learning activity. That way, because students do it, they also have to accept the risk.

Table 4. Dialog 4

Student – Teacher	The teacher asked about the material that has been explained previously, and most of the students answer that they still do not understand. However, this answer does not mean that students really do not understand the lesson material that the teacher has conveyed, but rather as an effort to avoid tasks usually given by the teacher when she has finished explaining the material.	a) "I don't understand everything, Mom" (one of the students shouted) b) "Mom, please explain again!" (then followed by several other students who also shouted) c) "Yes ma'am, Mom has to explain again, we still don't understand"

The data presented in table 4 above shows a violation of the politeness principle. The context is that the teacher had finished providing an explanation of the lesson material, and then asked students about their understanding of the material that had just been delivered. Students who knew the teacher's habits responded by stating that they all did not understand and they immediately asked the teacher to re-explain. Students knew that the teacher usually gave assignments after she finished explaining the subject materials. With these implicates, students gave answers to avoid assignments that would be given by the teacher, finally students stated "we still don't understand".

The next utterance that emerges from one of the students is a form of impoliteness which is manifested in direct speech. The student said "Mom, please explain again!". Actually it would be more polite if it was spoken through the use of indirect speech, such as "Sorry Mom, We hope that you can re-explain in this part", or "In this part, we are still having trouble to understand it." With such speech, the teacher's response or reaction will be slightly different compared to the direct speech form that asks the teacher to re-explain. The next utterance shows more coercion from the students to the teacher, namely: "Yes ma'am, Mom has to explain again, we still don't understand". This shows a violation of the element of politeness.

Students seemed to force the teacher to be able to explain further or re-explain the material that had been delivered. With the reason that they still did not understand the material, the teacher was forced to re-explain. Students did not realize that this can lead to another assumption in the teacher. Students might not really understand the material presented, but the language used by students made the teacher thought again to explain the material that had been delivered. This is the reason why humans have to rethink when they will express thoughts through spoken language.

There are many things that underlie the emergence of diversity in student speech. One of them is the students' lack of understanding of the politeness of language that must be owned and practiced in their daily lives. In addition, the input that students usually receive and see can greatly affect their language politeness. Students' speech is also influenced by the examples they receive.

Teachers also sometimes tend not to apply language politeness. However, in some cases there are efforts to improve language politeness. There are also many things that make teachers finally issue a less polite speech. Psychological conditions and workload become one of the things that influence the choice of language by teachers. The teacher's understanding of language politeness also has an effect.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis that has been described previously, the researchers conclude that the application of language politeness in the learning process needs to be continuously improved. This can be seen through the number of utterances, either teachers and students, or students with teachers, which show impoliteness in language. There are several things that influence the emergence of this phenomenon. The emergence of the phenomenon of impoliteness in language from the student's side is more influenced by exemplary elements from both the teacher and their environment. Meanwhile, from the teacher's point of view, the existence of psychological conditions and workload factors are elements that then lead to a language pattern that is less polite.

It is well understood that teachers have more workloads. In addition to delivering lesson material, teachers also have an obligation to instill good character in students. This task becomes very difficult when many other factors outside the school come into play. However, whatever the conditions, teachers are the leader in their class, especially in the learning process, the teacher is the benchmark for students' development.

Suggestions that can be conveyed based on these findings are that it is necessary to hold language politeness counseling in schools. Counseling is not only given to students but to all parties involved in the learning process. This is important to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the principles of language politeness. That way, the position of schools and educational institutions as behavior changers for the better will be realized. This effort is also a concrete action in restoring the nature of education as a tool to instill good character in students as part of efforts to form a reliable and superior young generation with positive values. At the very least, it can provide evidence that educated people can communicate more politely.

REFERENCES

Acharya, K. P. (2019). Inquiry-based science learning through school gardening activities: Wonderful experience through participatory action research. *International Journal of Elementary Education, 7*(3), 40-45.

Al-Obaydi, L. H., Doncheva, J., & Nashruddin, N. (2021). EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS'SELF-ESTEEM AND ITS CORRELATION TO THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. *Воспитание/Vospitanie-Journal of Educational Sciences, Theory and Practice, 16*(1), 27-34.

Bormann, N.-C., Cederman, L.-E., & Vogt, M. (2017). Language, religion, and ethnic civil war. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 61*(4), 744-771.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals of Language Use*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Cheng, E. C. K. (2017). Managing school-based professional development activities. *International Journal of Educational Management, 31*(4), 445-454. doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-02-2016-0042

Culpeper, J., Haugh, M., & Kádár, D. Z. (2017). *The Palgrave handbook of linguistic (im) politeness*: Springer.

Davis, A. E., Barrueco, S., & Perry, D. F. (2021). The role of consultative alliance in infant and early childhood mental health consultation: Child, teacher, and classroom outcomes. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 42*(2), 246-262.

Fegher, M., Kimathi, C. K., & Olouch-Suleh, E. (2020). Influence of Politeness Maxims during Conflict Resolution in Faith-based Institutions of Higher Learning in Karen â€"Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Marketing and Communication, 3*(2), 1-18.

Fraser, B. (2010). *Pragmatic competence: The case of hedging*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Group Limited.

Furkatovna, S. A., & Mekhrojevna, D. S. (2021). Verbal politeness as a regulator of verbal interactions. *Psychology and Education Journal, 58*(2), 5894-5902.

Gerrard, M. (2020). Mexican politeness: an empirical study on the reasons underlying/motivating practices to construct local interpersonal relationships. *Russian Journal of Linguistics, 24*(1), 31-55.

Goh, C., Leong, C., Kasmin, K., Hii, P., & Tan, O. (2017). Students' experiences, learning outcomes and satisfaction in e-learning. *Journal of E-learning and Knowledge Society, 13*(2).

Han, H. (2018). Studying religion and language teaching and learning: Building a subfield. *The Modern Language Journal, 102*(2), 432-445.

Kádár, D. Z., & Zhang, S. (2019). (Im) politeness and alignment: A case study of public political monologues. *Acta Linguistica Academica, 66*(2), 229-249.

Kelman, H. (2018). Language As Aid And Barrier To Involvement In The National System. In J. Fishman (Ed.), *Selected Studies and Applications* (pp. 185-212). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Koul, R., Lerdpornkulrat, T., & Poondej, C. (2018). Learning environments and student motivation and engagement: A review of studies from Thailand. *Asian Education Miracles*, 241-255.

Krylova, A., & Renkovskaya, E. (2020). Religion and language preservation: the case of Sora. *Journal of South Asian Languages and Linguistics, 7*(1), 85-104.

Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Viberg, O. (2018). Mobile collaborative language learning: State of the art. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 49*(2), 207-218.

Lakoff, R. T. (1976). Language and woman's place. *Language in Society, 2*(1), 45-80.

Leech, G. (1983). *The principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.

Masjedi, N., & Paramasivam, S. (2018). Complaint and politeness strategies used by Iranian speakers of English. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 7*(4), 38-49. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.3p.38

Nashruddin, N., & Al-Obaydi, L. H. (2021). Linguistics Politeness in Reinforcing Character During Learning Activities. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature, 8*(1), 210-217.

Pal Singh, B. (2018). Sikhs of Nagaon in Assam (India): Dilemmas of language and religion. *Sikh Formations, 14*(2), 117-134.

Wang, Z. (2021). Politeness in Making Requests and Responses in Computer-mediated Communication among Chinese College Students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 11*(1), 43-50.

Yasmin, M., Sohail, A., Sarkar, M., & Hafeez, R. (2017). Creative methods in transforming education using human resources. *Creativity Studies, 10*(2), 145-158.

Zheng, L., Bhagat, K. K., Zhen, Y., & Zhang, X. (2020). The effectiveness of the flipped classroom on students' learning achievement and learning motivation. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 23*(1), 1-15.

Zhou, Y., & Wei, M. (2018). Strategies in technology-enhanced language learning. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(2), 471-495.

Zhu, Y., & Bresnahan, M. J. (2018). Collective face, politeness strategies, and discomfort: Communication of American domestic students and Chinese international students. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 47*(2), 141-159. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2018.1438304