Politeness Markers in the Interaction between Students and Lecturers

Widya Fhitri and Rahma Yanti

English Department, Universitas Dharma Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

Keywords: Politeness, Requesting, Utterances, College Students, Lecturers.

Abstract: This study aims to describe and explain politeness markers that are contained in the sentences of student when making request to their lecturers at Dharma Andalas University. This is a qualitative descriptive study. The data collected consist of the requests made by students and lecturers. The results of data analysis contained in students' sentences consists of words used to ask for permission. These words may be used as much as 40 percent in the sentences of students when making requests to their lecturers. In addition, greeting, expressions such as "allow me to…" and "let's" are also used as much as 13% by students in their sentences to their lecturers. Only one data shows words to ask for help and make apologies are used by students.

1 INTRODUCTION

Politeness in speaking is a natural thing used by speakers to converse with their partners (Eelen, 2001; Oktavianus and Revita, 2010) . Politeness can be in the form of request or rejection (Revita, 2009). In this article, request politeness is a topic to discuss. A speech can be said to be polite when it has a proper choice of words or flat intonation. However, a speech that is considered impolite can also be said to be polite if there are factors that make it more polite. One of these factors is the politeness markers used when the speaker speaks (Eelen, 2001; Oktavianus and Revita, 2010; Revita, 2009; Pranowo, 2009).

In this article, the author tries to explain how a speech that is considered impolite or even unkind can become a polite speech due to politeness markers. There are several indicators that can mark a speech as polite, namely: the use of words such as *help*, *sorry*, *allowed*, *if*, *so*, *let's*, and *greeting* (Revita, 2009).

2 METHODS

This is a qualitative descriptive study. Data was collected by listening the requests made by students to their lecturers (Mahsun, 2005). Data retrieval was completed with recording and note-taking techniques. The data that has been obtained is transcribed and analyzed by using identity and distributional methods (Sudaryanto, 1993).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Politeness markers are important factors that indicate whether or not someone's speech is polite (Oktavianus and Revita, 2010; Revita, 2009; Ikawati, 2011; Manaf, 2003). Therefore, some of the permissions were granted to students by to the lecturers, for the following reasons:

3.1 The Use of the Word "Help"

Data 1

Student : Ma'am, please help me with the attendance list so i can follow the final exam in this semester.

Lecturer : What percentage do you have?

Student : less than 75 percent maam. **Please ma'am**.

Context:

A student asked the lecturer for help with his/her class attendance. He hoped that the lecturer could improve his class attendance so that he could take the semester exam. The conversation took place at the end of the lecture when the lecturer was about to leave the classroom.

A student came over to the lecturer and asked her to alter the attendant list to allow them to take the exam. It is clear that this speech can be categorized as a polite speech. This is evidenced by the style of language and the choice of words and intonation used by the student when speaking. The student chose to use the word "help" to complete his request to the lecturer. The word "help" is one of the words that can be used as a marker in a polite speech. The use of the word "help" is one indicator of someone speaking politely in asking (Pranowo, 2009).

3.2 The Use of the Word "Sorry"

Data 2
Student   : Sorry, ma'am, I can't come to campus next week because my sister is having a wedding party.
Lecturer : Oh Okay. .

Context:
A student asks the lecturer for permission to not attend the following week lectures. The conversation took place just at the end of the class.

A student chose to use the word "sorry" in his request to the lecturer. He apologized to the lecturer for not being able to attend the lecture the following week because of his sister's wedding party. When the word "sorry" is attached to one's speech, it automatically become a polite speech. Pranowo argues hat the use of the word "sorry" in the speech would make the sentence polite. It means that the word "sorry" plays an important role in determining whether or not a person is polite.

3.3 The Use of Word 'May' and Let's

The use of words 'may' is also another marker of politeness in someone's speech. The word "may" is usually used to ask for permission from the speecher's listening partner in carrying out an action that is marked or ordered. Some of the data that use the word "may" as politeness markers in the speech are data 4, 5, 6, 7,8, 9 and 10.

Data 4
Student **: Ma'am, I excuse to leave for a moment, please?**
Lecturer : Where are you going?
Student : I am going to the toilet Maam.
Lecturer   : No. You can not go anywhere, because the exam is ongoing. no one can leave the room.

Student : Please mam. I can't stand it anymore Maam.
Lecturer : Sorry. You will not.

Context:
A student asked the lecturer for permission by asking whether it is was permissible to leave the room during the exam. He praised the lecturer so that she would grant permission.

The data above can be used when students want to ask permission to go outside the classroom during the semester exam. It is different from the data 5 where the word "allowed" is used to tell the lecturer to go home because there are important things that he/she had to do. However, in plain view, these two data use the same permission words. Although the conversation in data 4 looks more friendly and polite because it was coupled with the use of acceptable words when compared to data 5, which can also be categorized as polite speech because it uses politeness markers.

Data 6
Student   : (a student takes the blackboard eraser and helps the lecturer who is also erasing the blackboard).
Can I help, ma'am? Actually this is our job, maam.
Lecturer : Oh yes. Of course with pleasure.

Context:
A student who approached the lecturer who appeared to be tired erasing the blackboard. The student asked to be allowed to help the lecturer.
Data 6 and 7 also shows polite speech because students uses permission words when they want to offer assistance to their lecturers. Even though the request was very beneficial to the lecturer, the student still needed a positive victim from his lecturer. Whereas, the use of the word "may" in the data 7 where students ask the lecturer to give them extra time to collect assignments. It is very detrimental to the lecturer but is beneficial to the students. Although, the two conversations above use the word may be in different situations, the speech is still polite, even more polite after using the politeness markers above.

Data 1
Student   : Let us carry it, Ma'am. (Suddenly a student approaches the lecturer to ask if he could help her with what she was carriying
Lecturer   : Oh .. Yuni. It is okay. I can carry it myself.

Student   : are you sure, Mam.
Lecturer : No. thanks.

Context:
A student offered to help the lecturer with what she was carrying but the lecturer refuses because she thought she was able to carry it. This conversation occurs when the lecturer was heading for the lecture hall.

Data 3
Student   : Is it heavy Mam, let me help. Later, you will get a headache like last week. May I?
Lecturer : Subhanallah. Thank you.

Context:
A student offers to help the lecturer carry her laptop and in focus. The student reported that the lecturer brought the equipment herself to the class.

In addition to permission words, the word *can* can also be used as an indicator of polite. It can be seen in data 1 and 3. In the data statement, it is clear that the supervisor uses the word to complete his speech to look more polite. Like the following data, *Let me bring that one,* which is a statement by a student to the lecturer who is walking to the lecture room. Students offered assistance to their lecturers by using polite sentences. These statements are categorized as polite speech because they apply several factors which make them more polite. In this case, the statement used the word "so". The same as with one data utterance, three data can also be categorized as polite speech because there is the use of the word expression "let's identified as an indicator of politeness. As explained by Pranowo, a speech can be said to be polite when using the permission expressions such as "so' and "let's". Therefore, the two speeches above are categorized as polite.

3.4   The Use of Greeting, Mr. Mrs.

The use of greeting Mr / Ms is also one of the politeness indicators/markers used by students when speaking with their lecturers. The use of greeting words is also one of the six markers of choice for someone to speak politely or impolitely. Therefore, the two data below are classified as data that have a single marker that only has a sign of the word "polite" "Maam / Mr." as a politeness marker although in general, all utterances use honorifics words.

Data 12
Student   : Maam, can we have class twice right now? So we can take a long holiday before Lebaran, Maam. (while blinking eyes to the lecturer)
Lecturer : Have I ever said that?
Student   : No ma'am, only you are kind and I'm sure you are strong. (laughing)

Context   :
A student asks in a tone instructing the lecturer to meet two times on the same day by seducing the lecturer. This speech occurs when the lecturer enters the lecture room. Then, a student came along beside the lecturer. The conversation happened within an informal situation.

Data 14
Student   : Miss, your autograph, Miss?
Lecturer : What for?
Student   : To repair KRS Miss.

Context:
A student directly asks his PA teacher's signature to correct KRS.

The two data above are utterances that use greeting words as the single markers used by speakers to their speech partners. It is clear that the conversation above does not have politeness markers other than the greeting word that is used repeatedly. The repetition of the greeting word is intended to make the speech more polite. The repetition of greeting words used by speakers is an indication of his/her attempt to be polite (Pranowo, 2009).

The use of the word "can"
Data 8
Student   : Ma'am, can we change the class schedule tomorrow ma'am?
Lecturer   : Anyway, how many times do we have to replace meetings?
Student   : Only one time Mrs.
Lecturer : All right, I will inform you later.

Context:
A student asks the lecturer to change the following day tomorrow. This speech happens took place at the end the class.

One of the students asked the lecturer if he could change the lecture schedule. the lecturer considered the students' request. In the speech asking that the speaker tuck in the word which is the indicator of linguistic politeness.

3.5 The Use of the Word "If"

Data 15
Student   : Maam, you look pale, today. what if you went home first? Yes ma'am.
Lecturer : Yes, I'm really dizzy.

Context :

A student tells his lecturer to go home so she can rest because she feels that her lecturer is very pale. The conversation occured when the lecturer was heading to the classroom.

Data 10
Lecturer   : Should we have extra study tomorrow?
Student   : what if tomorrow we don't come to campus, Maam? Because we want to go to our hometowns, Maam.
Lecturer : Okay. OK.

Context:
Some students request a day off from their lecturer so that they could go to their hometowns. This speech occurred at the end of the lecture.
Speech Data 10 and 15 Data utterances ten and fifteen are two examples of polite speech with politeness indicators for the use of the word "if". The use of words if in the speech above makes the speech more polite. The use of *if* makes the sentence softer. The use of the word means that the speech partner can choose the best choice and that benefit more speech partners. This is what makes the two data above more polite.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals that several indicators/ markers are used by students when speaking with their lecturers. The most politeness markers found are the use of permission words, such as the word of "may" *boleh*. Then, followed by so/let *mari*, greeting words *Mr, Mrs*, "help" *tolong*, if *jika*, and can *bisa*. In this study of politeness, all the problem formulation variables have been answered by the existing analysis. However, there are still linguistic aspects that can better be studied. The shortcomings contained in this study open up opportunities for further researchers to improve the present study. Politeness can occur in any environment. Be it family, school, campus or community life. We are civilized people, so it is best to maintain norms of politeness.

REFERENCES

Eelen, Gino. 2001. *Kritik Teori Kesantunan*. Surabaya: Airlangga University Press.
Ikawati, Nur Anisa. 2011. "Kesantunan Menolak dalam Interaksi Percakapan Keluarga AD di Kompleks Asmil Yonnif 514 Kabupaten Bondowoso (Kajian Etnografi Komunikasi)". *Tesis*. Universitas Negeri Malang dalam http://karyailmiah.um.ac.id/index.php/disertasi/article/view/10922 diakses25 Juni 2012.
Mahsun. 2005. *Metode Penelitian Bahasa: Tahapan strategi, Metode dan Tekniknya (ed. Revisi)*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
Manaf, Ngusman Abdul. 2003. "Kesantunan Berbahasa Kelompok Etnik Minangkabau dan Impilkasinya Terhadap Kesetaraan Jender" dalam *Kajian Sastra: Jurnal Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan dan kebudayaan*. Semarang: FS UNDIP.
Oktavianus dan Revita. 2010. "Kesantunan dalam Bahasa Minangkabau" dalam http://Ip.unand.ac.id diakses 25 Mei 2017
Pranowo. 2009. *Berbahasa secara Santun*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar.
Revita, Ike. 2009. "Faktor-Faktor Penanda Kesantunan dalam Permintaan Berbahasa Minangkabau (Kajian Pragmatik)" dalam *Jurnal Bahasa Januari-April 2009*. Brunei Darussalam: Syarikat Perniagaan dan Perkhidmatan Percetakan Ezy Sdn.
Sudaryanto. 1993. *Metode dan Aneka Teknik Analisis Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana.