



STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGE POLITENESS IN AN ONLINE LEARNING

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Abstract

This research aims to describe students' perception of language politeness in online learning. The method used in this research was qualitative descriptive. The population of the research was all undergraduate students of General English subject in a private university in east Jakarta. The sample was taken using purposive sampling which focuses on first semester students, in this case, 116 respondents. Data collection was taken by giving a questionnaire through Google Forms. The questionnaire was made using verbal indicators such as language style, deixis, punctuation, and six maxims of politeness by Leech and non-verbal features such as attire and paralinguistic aspects. The result shows if in general, the student's perception of politeness in online learning dominantly shows positive perception.

Keywords: *Politeness, Students' Perception, Online Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Pandemic which strokes our world since 2019 is not the only reason why online becomes the most ideal optional mode in most human activities. It is the 4.0 Industrial Revolution that holds the most important role to start this change and then the pandemic that forces it. The idea of the internet of things has been disrupted in many aspects such as economic, science, and technology, and this idea also affects education life (Maemunah, 2018).

The disruption has made education transform into various modes of learning. Learning mode is no longer dominated by physical meetings or face-to-face meetings. The learners are now introduced to online learning and forced to get used to it. Online learning is a learning process that is based on computers. (Thorne, 2003). In the beginning, the computer which is integrated with the internet functions as computer-based learning or CBL.

After some development, the computer has been replaced by the smartphone. It has made the learning process becomes more flexible and can be easily accessed. Space is no longer an obstacle in this situation. The learners can conduct the learning process synchronously or asynchronously (Isman, 2016).

The online course has some characteristics such as constructivism, social constructivism, a community of learners, website usage, interactions, independence, accessibility, and enrichment (Dirjen, 2016). These characteristics have brought some impacts to all users. All members of education are forced to adjust to the changes such as the changing of media, the material, or even the language is used during the learning process. Several platforms can be used in an online course from written interaction such as whatsapp or google classroom, audio-visual presentations such as PowerPoint, and audio-visual interaction which involves the third party such as zoom, Webex or google meet. The members of education are suggested to agree with the platform that is going to be used. Based on the questionnaire made by the writer to 116 undergraduate students in a private university, it is seen if WhatsApp becomes the first choice which shown by 73.5%, then google meets 13%, and zoom 8.6%.

Each choice of online mode of learning has its regulations that should be noticed by the user, named politeness. Politeness is defined by Rahadi (2005) as a speech act that is marked by some politeness expressions such as *help, please, go ahead, come on, let's go, hop, sorry, and thank you*. In this case, politeness requires an expression to be applied. Markham dan Sabardila (2009) mentions that politeness is a language used by the speaker in communication in such a way so that the hearer will not be offended or oppressed. While Leech (2011) formulates politeness into six maxims which are tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Each of the maxims has its principles. Principles for tact maxim are formed by making the least damage and the most benefit for someone else. Generosity maxims are formed by making the least benefit and most loss for ourselves. Both tact and generosity maxims use a pragmatic scale which is profit and loss. Approbation maxim has principles such as least criticizing and most praising someone else. Modesty maxim is formed by least praising and most criticizing ourselves. This maxim is expressed by speech act expressive and assertive. The agreement maxim is formed by making

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agreements as much as possible between the speaker and the hearer. The last maxim is sympathy which is formed by maximizing sympathy and minimizing antipathy to the hearer.

Other features that determine in developing politeness are language style, deixis, punctuation. Language style consists of different levels of formality which are informal, less formal, formal, extremely formal (Sheikha & Inkpen, 2011). Online learning is assumed to be a formal situation therefore it demands formal style, formal deixis, and right punctuation.

Politeness seems cannot avoid the impact of disruption since the modes of interacts are also changing. There are some features in the language that now come up as rules, such as emoticons and capitalization. It is now very common to use emoticons during written interactions. Emoticons in written interaction such as WhatsApp can be classified as a sign which is used to represent the sender's emotion (Purnomo & Muhibbin, 2018). In the beginning, the word of emoticons is a fusion of emotion and icon which are used to represent the emotion of the speaker. Nowadays, emoticons go far beyond emotion and become pragmatics markers (Skovholt, Grønning, & Kankaanranta, 2014). The usage of emoticons can also cause misunderstanding during the interaction if it is not used in the right condition.

Besides written interaction, audiovisual interaction has also caused changes in considering politeness. Language is no longer the only feature of politeness since culture and also paralinguistic features have determined politeness in communication. Casual attire and body language are now considered important items during communication. It is considered unpolite to turn off the video during the zoom meeting session or turn on the microphone during other people's sessions. To build a communication such as in online learning, the users need to be accustomed to those non-linguistic features. Some studies of language politeness have been conducted such as study by Parancika an Setyawan (2020) entitled *Analisis Kesantunan Berbahasa Mahasiswa Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika dalam Berinteraksi dengan Dosen Melalui Pesan Singkat Whatsapp: Kajian Pragmatik*. The study discovers if some undergraduate students are considered unpolite during their interaction by using informal style. Another study conducted by Budiwati (Yustisiana & Sari, 2016) entitle *Fenomena Penggunaan Emoticon pada Facebook dan Blackberry Messenger sebagai Alternatif Komunikasi Non-Verbal*. This study reveals if the interaction happened in informal situations by using an informal and casual style which is considered

unpolite. A relevant study is also conducted by Purnomo and Muhibbin (Purnomo & Muhibbin, 2018) entitled *Analisis Semiotika terhadap Penggunaan Emoticon Whatsapp dalam Komunikasi Interpersonal Antar Mahasiswa Ilmu Komunikasi Angkatan 2013*. This study finds that emoticons cannot be used randomly without notifying the situation of communication because it will lead to user's conflict.

Since the change happens rapidly, impoliteness may also occur for unknowing conditions of the language users, in this case, undergraduate students' perception. Desiderato (1976) explains that perception is an experience regarding objects, events, and relationships obtained through summarizing information and interpreting messages. Thus, perception gives meaning to sensory stimulation (Malihatin, 2012). A similar understanding of perception related to sensory stimuli was proposed by Branca (1964) that perception is a process that is preceded by sensing. Another expert Moscowitz and Orgel (1969) states that perception is an integrated process of stimulation received by individuals (Walgito, 2009).

Based on the background and relevant studies above it is clearly can be seen if politeness has reshaped and demands extra principles should be obeyed. The purpose of this research is to discover the undergraduate students' perception of politeness within online learning.

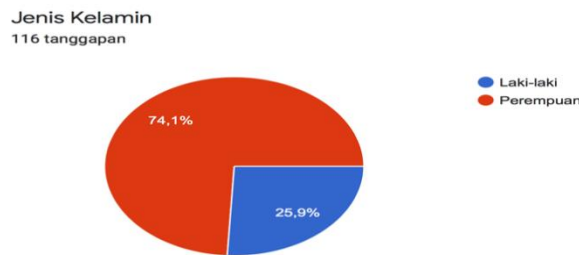
RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research was qualitative descriptive. The population of the research was all undergraduate students of General English subject in a private university in east Jakarta. The sample was taken using purposive sampling which focuses on first semester students, in this case, 116 respondents. Data collection was taken by giving a questionnaire through a google form. The questionnaire was made using verbal indicators such as language style, deixis, punctuation, and six maxims of politeness by Leech and non-verbal features such as attire and paralinguistic aspects. The questionnaire was arranged into two parts which were closed questions and opened questions. The answers provided for closed questions consist of yes, no, and sometimes. Opened questions are given to describe the reason for their answers. Data were analyzed using qualitative analysis consisting of data collection, data reduction, data representation, and conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was filled out by first-semester undergraduate students from the General English classrooms which consisted of 74.1% of females and 25.9% of males.

Diagram 1: Respondent's Description



The questionnaire consisted of 23 questions was made using verbal indicators such as language style, deixis, punctuation, and six maxims of politeness by Leech and non-verbal features such as attire and paralinguistic aspects. The dissemination of indicators can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Indicators of Politeness

Aspect	No	Feature	
Linguistics	1	Maxim Politeness	2, 4, 15, 16, 21, 22
	2	Language style, deixis, punctuation	3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13
Non-Linguistics	1	Culture	18, 19, 20, 23
	2	Paralinguistic aspects	12, 14, 17.

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Question 2: Do you follow every agreement decided in online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 94.8% of respondents answered 'yes' and 5.2% answered sometimes. Before the online learning was conducted, the students and the lecturer agreed to arrange a contract to maintain the learning process. It is considered impolite if during the learning process one of the parties is not following the agreement. It can be concluded that the majority of the students hold a maxim of agreement politeness which maximizes agreement and avoid disagreement.

Question 4: *Do you use 'help' when asking for help in an online co?*

Based on the questionnaire, 89.7 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 10.3% answered 'no'. It can be concluded that the majority of the students hold maxim politeness since they choose to use the politeness marker 'help' which is used for asking someone's favor (Rahardi, 2005).

Question 15: *Do you ask permission before giving an opinion on audio-visual online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 82.8 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 17.2% answered 'no'. The students asked permission first before conveying their opinion. This action showed politeness of agreement. It can be concluded that the majority of the students hold maxim politeness of agreement.

Some reasons for asking permission given by respondents are to act polite, to honor the lecture, to avoid contention among the students, and to avoid cutting someone's else utterance. While the reasons were given from those who answered no because they do not know.

Despite not knowing, asking permission before stating something in a formal situation hosted by someone is a polite manner.

Question 16: *Do you praise other students when they get a good result in audio-visual online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 73.3 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 26.7 % answered 'no'. Praising someone else in interaction is a polite manner. It shows a maxim of approbation. It can be concluded that the majority of the students hold maxim politeness of approbation.

Some reasons for praising someone else given by respondents are to show appreciation, to motivate someone else, to admit someone's else superiority, or to support their friend. While the reasons given from those who answered no are because they think praising is not something special.

Despite their thought of appraising, it is considered polite action to give compliments to other people since it is a form of appreciation.

Question 21: *Do you interrupt someone's else utterance in audio-visual online learning?*

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Based on the questionnaire, 99.1 % of respondents answered 'no' and 0.9% answered 'yes'. Interrupting someone's else utterance is considered an impolite manner. The opposite way, giving someone else time to finish their words is a form of maxim politeness of tact by minimizing someone's else loss. It is a form of wisdom. It can be concluded that the majority of the students hold maxim politeness of tact. Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if interrupting someone's else utterance was impolite action and considered that action as underestimating act. Along with their thoughts, not interrupting utterances and giving time for someone else to finish his word nurse polite actions.

Question 22: Do you make fun of someone's else mistakes in audio-visual online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 85.3 % of respondents answered 'no' and 13.8 % answered 'sometimes', and 0.9% answered 'yes'. Making fun of someone else is contrary action of praising. By rejecting this act, someone is considered polite. It can be concluded that the majority of the students hold maxim politeness of approbation. Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if making someone's else utterance was impolite action and Considered if making mistake in the learning process was a normal thing. Therefore, rejecting making fun is a polite act.

Students' Perception of Language Style, Deixis, Punctuation

Question 3: Is deixis an important feature in written online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 90.5 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 9.5% answered 'no'. During the interaction, it is important to maintain social balancing, phycology, and Hospitality among interlocutors (Prayitno, 2009). Deixis is one element that should be noticed when interlocutors interact. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite.

Question 5: Do you use capital letters in written online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 8.6 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 91.4% answered 'no'. Capital is used in front of the first letter of proper name, place, or the first word in a sentence (Widya in Lestari & Indihadi, 2019). Using a word with all capital letters in written interaction is considered as language deviation and understood as something else. When someone uses a capital letter in writing online it will be assumed as screaming action, and it

is not polite to speak using high pitch. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoiding using capital letters words.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that using capital letters shows anger or impoliteness. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated that using capital letters is aimed to make the utterance clearer.

Question 6: *Do you use initialized words in written online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 15.5 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 84.5% answered 'no'. Initialized words or abbreviations is a process of shortening words by merging letters or syllables from several words into one word. One the abbreviation form is by preserving the first three letters of words (Kridalaksana in Asih & Wahyuni, 2020). Despite it, it is considered impolite to use initialized words of the words derived from unformal style during online learning, such as 'omg' or 'otw'. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoided using initialized words of the words derived from unformal style during the online learning, such as 'omg' or 'otw'.

Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if using initialized words of the words derived from unformal style during the online learning, such as 'omg' or 'OTW' as impolite action. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if initialized words were easier to be written.

Question 7: *Do you use abbreviated words such as info. in written online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 31% of respondents answered 'yes' and 69 % answered 'no'. The abbreviation is a process of shortening words by merging letters or syllables from several words into one word. One abbreviation form is by preserving the first three letters of words (Kridalaksana in Asih & Wahyuni, 2020). Despite it, it is considered impolite to use abbreviated words such as 'info. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoiding using abbreviated words during online learning, such as info.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that using abbreviated words was impolite action and not every people could understand an that could abbreviated word cause misunderstanding. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if abbreviated words were faster to be written.

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Question 8: Do you use the number to replace reduplicated words in written online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 25.9 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 74.1% answered no'. Reduplication is a process of grammatical items' repetition whether partially or whole part (Ramlan in Pangastryan, 2017). The process of reduplication is conducted by repeating partial grammatical item of word or whole part connected by a dash. In language deviation, the reduplication is replaced by a number, such as a number 2 like in *saudara2*. It is considered impolite to use the numbers to replace whole reduplicated words in written online learning. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoiding using numbers to replace reduplicated words in written online learning.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that using numbers to replace reduplicated words is an impolite action and incorrectly in grammar. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated that using numbers to replace reduplicated words was faster to be written and clearer.

Question 9: Do you use emoticons in written online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 64.7 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 35.3% answered 'no'. Emoticons are symbols that are produced by innovatively repurposing and also blending the existing symbols to create something new (Thompson & Filik, 2016). Most of the time, emoticons can represent the unwritten feeling of the writers. On contrary, emoticons can be misunderstood if they are used in the wrong situations. Learning is a formal situation so it demands formal features involved in it. Emoticons are considered impolite to be used during this section. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are less polite since they like to use emoticons during online learning. Some of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that using emoticons was impolite action. While most respondents who answered 'yes' stated that using emoticons was useful to represent their feeling, to express something, or even to make the learning process to become more relaxing.

Question 10: Do you use numbers to replace words in written online learning such as in b2, s7?

Based on the questionnaire, .7 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 10.3% answered 'no'. Reduplication is a process of grammatical items' repetition whether partially or whole part

(Ramlan in Pangastryan, 2017). The process of reduplication is conducted by repeating partial grammatical item of word or whole part connected by a dash. In language deviation, the reduplication is replaced by a number, such as a number 2 or 4 like in b2, b4. It is considered impolite to use numbers to replace partial reduplicated words in written online learning. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoiding using numbers to replace partial reduplicated words in written online learning.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that using numbers to replace reduplicated words is an impolite action and incorrectly in grammar. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated that using numbers to replace partial reduplicated words was a lot simpler.

Question 11: *Do you use informal words in written online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 19.8 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 80.2 % answered 'no'. Informal interaction occurs when the interlocutors have the same position whether social or economic so they may interact freely (Rukiah, 2010). In an online learning process, it is obvious if the position of the lecturer is higher than his/her students that make informal situations are not allowed to happen. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoiding using informal words in written online learning.

Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if informal words as impolite action and incorrectly in grammar. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if using informal words was their habit.

Question 13: *Do you use informal words in audio-visual online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 4.3 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 95.7 % answered 'no'. Informal interaction occurs when the interlocutors have the same position whether social or economic so they may interact freely (Rukiah, 2010). In an online learning process, it is obvious if the position of the lecturer is higher than his/her students that make the informal situation is not allowed to happen. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were avoiding using informal words in audio-visual online learning.

Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if informal words as impolite action and incorrectly in grammar. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated that using informal words was encouraged by their lack of knowledge.

Students' Perception of Culture Aspect

Question 18: Do you use casual attire in audio-visual online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 51.7 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 48.3% answered 'no'. Style of dressing and appearance act to find the distinct feel that increases the rolling of performance. One's feeling of prominence is improved when the different portions of the whole, body, and clothes, unite (Flugel in Rubinstein, 2018). It is clear if every situation demands its attire as a doctor requires his/her white suit. Audio-visual online learning is a formal situation that needs formal attire. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are less polite since they were using casual attire in audio-visual online learning.

Some of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if using casual attire as impolite action, lack of ethics, and not showing respect to lecture. While most other respondents who answered 'yes' stated that using casual attire because it made them more comfortable and relax. They also assumed that the audio-visual online learning was conducted from home so they felt free to use any attire they liked.

Question 19: Do you turn on the microphone all the time in audio-visual online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 18.1 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 81.9% answered 'no'. The right procedure in operating an audio-visual online application such as zoom or google meet is by unmuting the microphone when other people speak (Syaharuddin, 2020). Turning on the microphone all the time in audio-visual online learning is analogized to speaking all the time. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were muting the microphone when other people speak audio-visual online learning.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that turning on the microphone all the time was impolite action because that action could bother the learning process, cause sound distortion, and lessen the focus on the other participants. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated that turning on the microphone all the time made them easy to convey their thought.

Question 20: Do you turn off the camera all the time in audio-visual online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 47.4 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 52.6 % answered 'no'. Audio-visual online learning such as zoom or google meet is a learning platform that enables students and lecturers to meet face to face virtually (Kusuma&Hamidah in Rasyid,

Amaliyah, & Nurlaili, 2020). It is clear if the purpose of audio-visual online learning is to facilitate students and lecturers. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were turning on the camera during audio-visual online learning.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that turning on the camera during audio-visual online learning is an unwritten regulation and a form of respecting lectures. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if they turned off the camera during audio-visual online learning because they had not prepared themselves, not supporting condition, or because of the signal problem.

Question 23: *Do you leave a virtual meeting without giving notice first?*

Based on the questionnaire, 89.7 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 10.3% answered 'no'. Audio-visual online learning such as zoom or google meet is a learning platform that enables students and lecturers to meet face to face virtually (Kusuma&Hamidah in Rasyid, Amaliyah, & Nurlaili, 2020). It is clear if audio-visual online learning should be treated like a face-to-face meeting. That is why leaving a virtual room is analogized as leaving the real class. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they leaving audio-visual online learning by giving notice first.

Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if leaving audio-visual online learning by giving notice first as a form of respecting lecture and it was impolite to leave without notifying first. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if they left audio-visual online learning without giving notice first because of the signal problem.

Students' Perception of Paralinguistic Aspect

Question 12: *Do you point your fingers at video online learning?*

Based on the questionnaire, 7.8 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 92.2 % answered 'no'. Pointing fingers implies a gestural message of dislike to the object being pointed (Diniati & Pratiwi, 2018). Pointing fingers while uttering something may be considered an impolite action. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were not pointing their fingers while uttering something during audio-visual online learning.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that pointing their fingers while uttering something during audio-visual online learning was impolite. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if they pointed their fingers while uttering something during audio-visual online learning because of accidentally forgot.

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Question 14: Do you attend a virtual meeting informally?

Based on the questionnaire, 5.2 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 94.8 % answered 'no'. Audio-visual online learning such as zoom or google meet is a learning platform that enables students and lecturers to meet face to face virtually (Kusuma&Hamidah in Rasyid, Amaliyah, & Nurlaili, 2020). It is clear if a virtual meeting requires a formal manner such as a gesture. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were joining audio-visual online learning formally.

Most of the respondents answered 'no' agreed if joining audio-visual online learning formally was a polite act. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if they joined audio-visual online learning informally because they were not accustomed to it.

Question 17: Do you use high pitch in audio-visual online learning?

Based on the questionnaire, 2.6 % of respondents answered 'yes' and 97.4% answered 'no'. Audio-visual online learning such as zoom or google meet is a learning platform that enables students and lecturers to meet face to face virtually (Kusuma&Hamidah in Rasyid, Amaliyah, & Nurlaili, 2020). It is clear if a virtual meeting requires a formal manner including tone. It is considered impolite to use high pitch all the time. It can be concluded that the majority of the students are polite since they were not using high pitch and audio-visual online learning.

Most of the respondents who answered 'no' agreed that using high pitch all the time was impolite action. While some other respondents who answered 'yes' stated if they used high pitch all the time audio-visual online learning informally because they were not accustomed to it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, viewed from a linguistic aspect such as politeness maxim, all respondents had positive perceptions. From 6 questions, all questions responded dominantly by polite perception. While based on their perception of language style, deixis, punctuation, the result discovers if they had positive perceptions, except for the usage of emoticons. From 9 questions, only 1 question was responded to by impolite perception. Other aspects of politeness such as culture and paralinguistic aspects showed positive responses. From 7 questions of non-linguistics aspects of politeness, only 1 question was

responded to by impolite perception. In general, it can be seen if the students' perception of politeness in online learning dominantly shows positive perception.

Based on the research it can be seen that politeness in digital is changing. The changing need to be responded to positively since conventional education starts transforming into digital education. All education members should be ready to change their behavior, including to rethink politeness.

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