



## The Use of Lakoff's Politeness Model in the Politeness Utterances of Lecturers to Students in the Lecturing Process

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### Abstract

This research aims to describe the polite utterances of the language use performed by lecturers to students when performing lectures in the classroom. The lecturers have an affecting social role in Indonesia. Social role is inherent in individual lecturers in any social situation and throughout their lives, so that every action or word of a lecturer tends to attract the attention of many people. This research has living values beneficial to society. The politeness model of Layoff is used to ascertain the politeness utterances of the lecturers denoting to the speech act types of Searle. The research is a naturalistic, qualitative and descriptive method under the umbrella of pragmatic study. The data is obtained directly from the classroom by using a recording device, the collected data are the utterances performed by the lecturers in the lecturing process. The result of research illustrates the politeness utterances performed by the lecturers occurred in the speech act of directive, expressive, and assertive; and the politeness utterances in the speech act of directive is most frequently utterance occurred.

**Keywords:** *Politeness; Utterances; Lecturers; Speech Act; Pragmatics*

### Introduction

Language is a connecting media that serves as a communication tool to understand the speaker's intent and purpose (Elsa et al., 2024). The purpose of communication is to transmit messages and maintain social relationships normally used verbal language, either spoken or written that understood by both the speaker and the hearer (Widyaiswara et al., 2023). The understanding clarifies that through language, namely from the words, sentences, or utterances produced by the speaker, the function of language and how the function is expressed by a speaker can be explored and understood more deeply. These language functions include asking, giving instructions or commanding, pleading, informing, praising, complaining, making promises, thanking, insinuating, cursing, and others. These language functions are closely related to the study of language use in the realm of pragmatics.

The language use in communication event that occurs during the lecturing process in classrooms or laboratories involves lecturer as the speaker and students as the hearers. The lecturer's figure has a strategic social influence in the communication event, thus having a large role or power in regulating the course of communication. However, in communicating or interacting with students, good or polite ways are still required so that communication goals can be achieved. Therefore, polite speaking or polite language use should be performed by a lecturer as a speaker in the communication event that occur in the class room; this necessity correlates with the understanding that the lecturing or learning process is not merely carrying out the process of transferring knowledge but more than that, the process of building the living values.

The Indonesian nation as part of the world community is known as a polite nation. Such conclusions are often expressed by heads of state, government officials, and foreign tourists who visit Indonesia (Andianto et al., 2020). This view is in line with that expressed by Sadtono (2003:127), arguing that Indonesians are good at expressing something unpleasant in a gentle and subtle or indirect way. Politeness in language use is one of the characteristics of the Indonesian nation that is known in the international world, besides that Indonesia is also known for its value of reaching decisions through deliberation and consensus in order to maintain unity and harmony (Santoso:2012). Politeness in language use is a form of culture in a social environment (D. Agustina et al., 2020) and politeness in language use has an important function to foster the positive image of the speaker, as well as to show national identity (Permanamiarta, 2022), and politeness in language use is a pillar of character formation in the education process (D. Agustina et al., 2020).

Politeness in language use can be defined as ethics in socializing within a community, or wherever we are, through the use of language and the selection of appropriate words, as well as paying attention to where, when, and to whom we are speaking (Tarsinih, 2023). In the view of Huang (2007:115), politeness in language use is related to the use of indirect language when speaking something; Huang stated that the use of indirect speech in general is associated with politeness. Indirect speech acts are usually considered to be more polite than their direct counterparts. Other linguists, Brown and Levinson (1987), stated that politeness in language use in an interaction will be realized if between the speaker and the interlocutor mutually maintain self-esteem according to public views or in other words, mutually maintain each other's face. And before the opinions expressed by the experts above, Lakoff (1973:298) had initiated the concept of politeness in language use in the form of three rules of language politeness that must be fulfilled by the speakers so that politeness in language in interaction can be carried out. The three rules of politeness of Lakoff are (1) Don't Impose, (2) Give Options, and (3) Make the others feel good. Don't Impose advises that a speaker should minimize the imposition of his or her own needs, desires, or opinions on the other person. Give Options emphasizes providing the hearer with choices or alternatives, rather than forcing a particular course of action or a "yes/no" response. And Make the Others Feel Good focuses on making the hearer feels good, comfortable or appreciated; it is about fostering a sense of shared understanding, positive regard, and solidarity.

Studies of politeness utterances from previous studies that are relevant to the present study include: "Politeness of Lecturers to Students in Indonesian Language Learning" (Sudrajat & Mansyur, 2022). The research used the theory of politeness from Leech (1979) where the politeness model included six maxims, namely the maxim of wisdom, generosity, praise, humility, agreement, and sympathy. The results showed that the politeness utterance of the maxim of praise made by lecturers showed utterances that tended to be most dominantly used by lecturers in the learning process. The maxim of wisdom and the maxim of sympathy indicate the second tendency used by lecturers. Next, the third tendency was the maxim of generosity and the maxim of humility, and the last was the maxim of agreement.

A study entitled "Politeness Utterances In Teaching Learning English Process" (Sudarsi et al., n.d.) highlighted the practice of politeness in language use carried out by teachers with their students in the English learning process at SMK Harapan Toraja. The results of their research showed that teachers

used the pronoun utterances *mu*, *kamu*, and *kau* when calling students in the learning process. The use of personal pronoun utterances showed the practice of politeness in language use because teachers had a higher social status than their students.

Study titled 'Politeness Strategies in the Teaching Learning Process in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)' examined language politeness strategies in English as a foreign language lecture interactions (Santoso & Yulianti, 2022). The research findings indicated that there were three types of politeness strategies used by teachers in the EFL teaching and learning process at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta: 1 negative politeness, direct politeness, and positive politeness. The forms of politeness strategies used by teachers in the English teaching and learning process were imperative, declarative, and interrogative, with imperative sentence forms being the most frequently used by teachers.

Several other studies related to language politeness in educational settings were 'Politeness and Power Relation in EFL Classroom Interactions: A Study on Indonesian Learners and Lecturer' by (Agustina & Cahyono, 2016); 'Patterns of Politeness in Teacher-Student Interaction: Investigating an Academic Context' (Karimnia & Khodashenas, 2017); 'Politeness of Directive Speech Acts on Social Media Discourse and Its Implications for Strengthening Student Character Education in the Era of Global Education' (Prayitno et al., 2021); and 'Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies in Lecturer-Student Communication Within Cyberpragmatic Chats' (Risdianto et al., 2023);

Referring to the aforementioned previous studies, there are differences that can be explored and deepened. These differences can be looked into from the theory of language politeness used and the background of the speakers as respondents. This current study uses Lakoff's politeness theory, which is linked to Searle's speech act theory, to obtain the forms, functions, and meanings of politeness utterances of lecturers in the lecturing process. The current research specifically discusses the use of polite language by lecturers towards students in the lecturing process.

The use of polite language in daily communication, especially in oral speech, requires to be considered by every individual involved in a communication interaction or conversation. The objective is to allow communication or interaction to proceed smoothly and easily. For the Javanese community in particular and the Indonesian society in general, the use of polite language is believed to maintain harmonious social relations in life. This also applies to lecturers or educators in higher education when they communicate with students in the lecturing process in the classroom. The use of polite language in the educational atmosphere, particularly in classrooms, has a great potential to foster a positive and conducive learning milieu for students in particular.

A lecturer, the one with the duty and responsibility to educate and teach students, his/her daily actions, included his/her language use, will be the center of attention, not only for the students but also for the wider community. Every utterance the lecturer generates in the lecturing process will bring psychological benefits as well as positive appreciation from students. The psychological benefits can lead to the rising motivation of learning and the student's achievement. On the basis of the phenomenon of language use mentioned above, this study examined the use of Lakoff's politeness model in the politeness utterances performed by lecturers towards students in the lecturing process, the politeness models are Don't impose, Give options, and Make the others feel good.

## **Method**

This current research is a descriptive qualitative study, with the researcher as the key element in this qualitative research. This study contains an exposition that demonstrates the application of politeness in language use of lecturers in the lecturing process. The data collection method used in this research was direct and natural at the site where the interaction event was occurring in the classroom. The research data collection technique was carried out through the arrangement of primary and secondary sources using the

techniques of listening, recording, and note-taking.. The observation strategy used in the data collection was active participation, where the researchers were present directly in the classroom and interacted in the classroom while also collecting data by recording the voice of the lecturer, as informant, who was conducting the lecturing process with a voice recorder. The recording results, in the form of utterances, were then transcribed into written data for further qualitative analysis.

The presentation of research results on language can be accomplished formally and informally. As stated by Sudaryanto (1993: 144), the formal method is a way of presenting data analysis results that is concise and dense; at a glance, the presented description can be fully grasped, while the informal method is a method that presents a detailed description of the data analysis results, giving the impression of being relatively lengthy. This research uses the formal method to present the data analysis results in the form of tables, and the informal method is used to narrate or describe the research findings.

## ***Finding and Discussion***

### **1. The Context of Lecturers' Utterances to the Students.**

The communication events that underlined the utterances of the speakers, namely lecturers 1, 2, 3, and 4, were the lecturing events taking place in classroom and computer laboratory within the internal campus atmosphere of a university and polytechnic in Surakarta. The setting of these communication events was the utterance context becoming a part of the construction of the form, function, and meaning of a utterance or speech act. In addition, the socio-cultural background of the speakers was also an inseparable part of the utterance construction. The socio-cultural backgrounds of the speakers in this study included the lecturer's ethnic origin, gender, the type of higher education institution, and the courses taught by the lecturer.

All four speakers come from the same ethnicity, namely Javanese, so the Javanese culture and language use are their daily habits. The speakers consist of 2 female lecturers and 2 male lecturers, 3 lecturers come from university and 1 from polytechnic. The speaker or lecturer 1 taught the academic writing course in the English language study program, lecturer 2 taught the engineering drawing course in the mechanical engineering study program, lecturer 3 taught the linguistics course in the English language study program, and lecturer 4 taught the cost accounting course in the accounting study program.

### **2. The Politeness Utterances of Lecturers to Students**

The polite language utterances of lecturers to students in this study used Lakoff's politeness model and Searle's speech act types. Lakoff's politeness model was used to determine the polite utterance models used by lecturers in classroom interactions. Lakoff's polite utterance model has three forms: Don't impose or force the hearer, Give choices to the hearer, and Make the hearer feels good or comfortable. Meanwhile, Searle's (1969) speech act types were used to categorize the types of polite utterances performed by lecturers, which consist of assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative.

Research findings revealed that politeness in the form of directive speech acts dominated the classroom interaction. Not all types of speech acts were used by every lecturer during the classroom interaction. One lecturer used English as the medium of classroom interaction, while the other three used Indonesian. The data obtained in this study and the explanations were exemplified as follows.

#### **a. Politeness Model: Don't Impose the Hearer**

The politeness utterance model "Don't impose the hearer" describes the speaker's intention to minimize the psychological burden or pressure on the hearer or speech partner. Examples of utterances made by the lecturers were illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Politeness Model: Don't Impose the Hearer and Type of Speech Act

Speakers	Don't Impose		Hearer		
	Assertive	Directive	Act Type	Commissive	Expressive Declaration
Lecturer 1	X	Kalian ada berapa total mahasiswa? <b>'How many students are there totally?'</b> (D1-KDir1) 2) <i>Intan sudah jadi?'</i> <b>Intan, have you finished? (D1-KDir2)</b>	X	X	X
Lecturer 2	<i>Sik, iki tak hapuse kabeh</i> <b>'A minute, I delete this (D2-A1).</b>	X	X	X	X
Lecturer 3	X	You <b>should</b> concern the information of the title, and also the journal article's name(D2-KDir1)	X	X	X
Lecturer 4	X	<i>Kemarin ada tugas sebelum-nya dari saya, silakan dikumpulkan</i> 'Yesterday, I gave a task. <b>Please, submit it'</b> (D4-KDi4)	X	X	X

Table 1 describes the politeness model of Don't Impose Others. The politeness model was performed in directive speech acts by all four speakers, Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, Lecturer 3, and Lecturer 4; and one assertive speech act was performed by lecturer 2. The politeness utterances performed by Lecturer 3 were in English language, while the three others, \_Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, and Lecturer 4,\_ were in Indonesian language. The politeness utterances of directive speech acts performed by Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, and Lecturer 4 were in interrogative form, while the declarative form was performed by Lecturer 3. And the politeness utterance of assertive speech acts performed by Lecturer 2 was in declarative form.

The use of interrogative utterances to ask speech partners to do something was a realization of directive speech acts that was carried out politely by the speakers, namely Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, and Lecturer 4. The interrogative utterances in directive speech acts were one of the markers of language politeness, this illustrates an indirect request from the lecturers to the students to do something.

The use of declarative directive utterances politely performed by Lecturer 3 occurred in the English linguistic code. This was reasonable, considering that Lecturer 3 is an English language lecturer and the hearers are students of the English language study program. This polite English utterance from lecturer 3 was represented by the use of 'should' in the utterance 'You should concern the information of the title'. In English, the use of 'should' functions to soften the pressure of a command or request; in other words, the utterance did not create a burden for the speaker. This would be different if the speaker used the word 'must' in the directive utterance, because 'must' has a meaning that implies an obligation, which

is the same as giving a burden to the speech partner. So, if the speaker used 'must' in their directive speech act, it had the meaning of burdening the speech partner. This fact illustrated the politeness of directive speech acts was also determined by the use of certain words or diction.

The politeness of performing assertive speech acts by Lecturer 2 was generated in the Javanese language utterance *Sik iki tak hapuse kabeh* 'Wait a minute, I'll delete this'. This utterance was not only informing or stating something to the students, but also contained the intention of Lecturer 2 asking permission to do something. The utterance illustrated Lecturer 2 performing an action that was not authoritarian towards the students as their speech partners; the students did not feel burdened.

### b. Politeness Model: Giving Options to Hearer

The politeness model of Giving Options to Hearer describes the speaker's intention to provide alternatives to the speech partner to do something. By providing alternatives, the speech partner has the right or authority to do something. Examples of utterances made by the lecturers are shown in Table 2.

Tabel 2: Politeness Model: Give Options to Hearer and Speech Act Type

Speakers:	Give Options to Hearer Speech Act Type				
	Assertive	Directive	Commissive	Expressive	Declaration
Lecturer 1	X	<i>Coba, coba, di jender analisis di iklan apa saja? Kalau kamu klik feminis jender analisis, di iklan apa saja? 'Try, try on gender analysis in what kind of ads? If you suit on gender analysis, in what kind of ads? (D1-KDir9)</i>	X	X	X
Lecturer 4	X	<i>Sebuah perusahaan pasti akan memperhitungkan leverage kemudian solvabilitas dari sebuah perusahaan tersebut, mengukur apa leverage itu? Ada yang bisa menjawab? 'A company must calculate the leverage and solvability of the company; what does leverage calculate for? Anybody can answer? (D4-KDir 18)</i>	X	X	X

Table 2 describes the politeness utterance model Giving Options to the Hearer. This politeness utterance model was only performed in directive speech acts by Lecturer 1 and Lecturer 4, and occurred in the interrogative form. The politeness utterance marker which indicates that the speech partner has a choice to do something was illustrated by Lecturer 1 by using utterance *Coba, coba di jender analisis di iklan apa saja* 'Try, try, in what kind of advertisements?' This utterance contained a meaning that Lecturer 1, as the speaker, provided

alternatives to the hearer to determine something. And in the utterance of Lecturer 4 *Ada yang bisa menjawab* 'Anyone can answer?', this meant that the speaker gave a choice to each student, as a hearer, to answer or not answer the question given.

### c. Politeness Model: Making the Hearer Feel Good and the Speech Act Type

The politeness model "Making the Hearer feel good" describes the speaker's intention to respect the speech partner. This relates to respecting the social background of the speech partner. Examples of utterances made by the lecturers are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Politeness Model: Making the hearer feel good and Speech Act Type

Speakers	Making the Hearer Feel Good Speech Act Type				
	Assertive	Directive	Commissive	Ekspresive	Declaration
Lecturer 1	<i>Karena menulis itu butuh proses, gak bisa njenengan diem-diem</i> 'Writing needs a process, <b>you</b> could not be passive (D1-KA1)	<i>Coba hari ini ketemu saya ya mbak Angel?</i> 'Please, today you meet me, , miss Angel? (D1-KDir 11).	x	x	x
Lecturer 2	x	Kamu kemarin membaca hasil teknik, <i>bisa ta mbak?</i> 'Yesterday you read technique product, <i>can you, ta (right)</i> , Miss? (D2-KDir3)	x	Iki kok koyo ngene, <i>ngopo?</i> 'Trouble is happening, <i>why?</i> ' (D2-KE2)	x
Lecturer 4	x	Ayo, <i>silakan</i> kelompok 3, presentasi <i>tentang apa?</i> Come on, please group 3, what topic to present? (D4-KDi1)	x	x	x

Table 3 describes the politeness utterance model of "Making the Hearer Feel Good"; this politeness utterance model was performed by Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, and Lecturer 4. The utterances from the lecturers were illustrated in assertive and directive speech acts. Assertive politeness speech act is

represented in the use of the Javanese word *njenengan* 'you' in the utterance *Karena menulis itu butuh proses, gak bisa njenengan diem-diem* "Writing needs a process, you can't be silent (D1-KA1)". In Javanese culture, the word *njenengan* 'you' a second-person pronoun, is used to respect someone, it is a respectful address. The respectful address *njenengan* 'you' made the hearer felt comfortable, the hearer was respected by the speaker. Directive politeness utterance was also performed by Lecturer 1. This was represented in the use of the word and phrases *Coba* 'Please' and *ya mbak* 'ya Miss' in the utterance *Coba hari ini ketemu saya, ya mbak Angel* 'Please, meet me today, Miss Angel' (D1-KDir11). In Javanese language, utterance *ya* is functioned to moderate or soften the psychological vibes for being a polite utterance. The utterance *mbak* 'Miss' is used to address a girl or woman who has not got married yet, it also shows a polite way to address someone in Javanese culture. Thus, the word *Coba* 'Please' and phrase *ya mbak Angel* 'yes Miss Angel' were indicators of politeness utterance functioning to mitigate or to soften a direct instruction, the hearer would feel comfortable to accept an instruction. Therefore, the politeness utterance described a directive speech act that makes the hearer feels good.

Politeness utterances performed by Lecturer 2 occurred in directive (D2-KDir3) and expressive (D2-KE2) speech acts. The directive politeness speech act was illustrated by the use of address *mbak* 'Miss' and expression *ta* 'right' in the utterance *Kamu kemarin membaca hasil teknik, bisa ta mbak?* 'Yesterday you read technique product, can you Miss, right?' (D2-KDir3). The utterance '*bisa ta mbak?*' is a mix of Indonesian and Javanese language, it is equal to English utterance *Can you Miss, right?*. The utterance *ta* is a kind of particle in Javanese language that functions to strengthen a feeling on something (Widada, et.al. 2000: 754) and the utterance '*mbak*' is an address expressing a respect to the hearer. Hence, the directive politeness utterance created a feeling of comfort for the hearer.

And in expressive politeness utterance, it was shown by the utterance '*ngapa* in the interrogative form *Iki kok koyo ngene, ngopo?* 'Trouble is happening, why?' (D2-KE2). This utterance expressed the speaker, Lecturer 2, when experiencing problems with the computer used when teaching the Technical Drawing course in the computer lab. And the expressive utterance was addressed to the speaker himself as an expression of surprise or disappointment, not addressed to students. Thus, the utterance did not create an uncomfortable emotional effect for the hearer, lecturer 2 made the students felt good..

Directive politeness utterance was also performed by Lecturer 4. This was illustrated in the utterance *Ayo, silakan kelompok 3, presentasi tentang apa?* 'Come on, please group 3, what topic to present?' (D4-KDi1), this politeness utterance was structurally in the form of a combination of imperative-interrogative. The linguistic marker of politeness utterance is the use of the imperative form *silakan* 'please' and the interrogative form *what topic to present?*; such utterances created a feeling of comfort for the hearer. The directive politeness utterance functioned to command in a polite way meaning that the speaker, Lecturer 4, asked the hearers (students from group 3) to carry out the presentation task of conveying a certain topic that had been given by Lecturer 4.

## Conclusion

The results of the research and discussion regarding the politeness of lecturers' language to students in the lecturing process in the classroom show politeness speeches that are in line with Lakoff's politeness model. And from the five types of speech acts version Searle used by the speakers or lecturers, there are three speech acts that are functioned by the speakers, namely directive, assertive, and expressive speech acts. The other two speech acts, commissive and declaration, are not functioned by the speakers. And the dominant polite speech act performed by the lecturers is the directive speech act.

The structural and socio-cultural patterns of politeness speech used by lecturers in their interactions with students in the classroom occur in interrogative, declarative, and imperative forms. Structurally, the interrogative form is dominantly used by lecturers when performing polite directive speech acts to students. And the declarative form is used by lecturers when performing polite assertive



and expressive speech acts to students. Socio-culturally, the politeness speeches made by the lecturers occur in the form of using Indonesian mixed with Javanese (code mixing) as the mother tongue of the lecturers. The use of Javanese in performing directive, assertive, or expressive speech acts is intended by the speakers as a practice of speaking politely. The socio-cultural pattern of politeness that is formed is closely related to the socio-cultural background of the lecturers, namely Javanese culture.

Future research, for the purposes of scientific development and broader benefit, may consider other cultural backgrounds such as Minangkabau, Batak, Sundanese, Balinese, or others. Thus, it has the opportunity to produce a more diverse collection of language politeness speeches, which in the end is to expand the repertoire of linguistic science and social and cultural benefits.

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