

Politeness in Requesting and Refusing within Students' Conversation at SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan

Nurhayani¹

¹Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah Medan, e-mail: hayanin009@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of politeness strategies in requesting and refusing within students' conversations at SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan, particularly among Generation Z learners in the millennial era. This research adopts a qualitative approach, using interviews and observation as instruments for data collection. The data were analyzed qualitatively to assess how students apply politeness in everyday communication. The findings reveal that students' approaches to learning, discussion styles, and use of learning resources are significantly influenced by their surrounding environment and upbringing. Although students are actively involved in various school-based activities and organizations, a decline in manners and moral values was observed, which is attributed to generational shifts and reduced emphasis on character education. Furthermore, the influence of technological advancement and liberal educational practices appears to shape students' critical thinking, particularly in adapting to frequent changes in curriculum and learning models.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji penggunaan strategi kesantunan dalam menyampaikan permintaan (requesting) dan penolakan (refusing) dalam percakapan siswa di SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan, khususnya di kalangan peserta didik Generasi Z pada era milenial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dan observasi. Data dianalisis secara kualitatif untuk menilai bagaimana siswa menerapkan kesantunan dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan siswa terhadap pembelajaran, gaya berdiskusi, dan penggunaan sumber belajar sangat dipengaruhi oleh lingkungan sekitar dan pola asuh. Meskipun siswa aktif terlibat dalam berbagai kegiatan dan organisasi di sekolah, terlihat adanya penurunan dalam aspek sopan santun dan nilai moral, yang dikaitkan dengan pergeseran generasi dan berkurangnya penekanan pada pendidikan karakter. Selain itu, kemajuan teknologi dan praktik pendidikan yang lebih liberal tampaknya turut membentuk pola pikir kritis siswa, khususnya dalam menyesuaikan diri terhadap perubahan kurikulum dan model pembelajaran yang terus berkembang.

Kata Kunci : kesantunan, meminta, menolak, percakapan

Corresponding Author : Nurhayani, e-mail: hayanin009@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Politeness is a fundamental aspect of human behavior that plays a vital role in shaping interpersonal interactions. It encompasses a range of attitudes and values that influence how individuals relate to one another in daily life. Although often overlooked, politeness is essential for maintaining respectful and effective communication. People may sometimes communicate in a direct manner without fully considering the moral values embedded in their behavior, which can lead to unintended misunderstandings or social tension (Pandang et al., 2024). Politeness is reflected through various characteristics, such as friendliness, which fosters approachability and warmth in interactions (Indrawati et al., 2018). Hospitality, as a form of friendliness, involves offering comfort and attentiveness to others, thereby enhancing social harmony. Honesty also strengthens polite behavior, contributing to trust and sincerity in relationships. Furthermore, politeness requires mental discipline, which shapes a person's attitude and self-control in communication. In essence, politeness is a multidimensional construct that integrates ethical awareness, emotional intelligence, and social sensitivity.

In the field of language studies, politeness refers to the way individuals communicate with others, particularly in terms of showing respect and consideration. This is especially relevant in educational contexts, where students interact not only with their peers but also with authority figures such as teachers. Politeness becomes crucial in conversations that involve requesting assistance or politely refusing requests, as these interactions require sensitivity and social awareness. The present study aims to examine students' use of politeness strategies, as these are essential components of effective communication and character education. While it does not imply that students inherently lack politeness, it emphasizes the importance of nurturing polite behavior as part of their social development. Since language functions as a fundamental tool for communication, its users must engage cooperatively to maintain clarity and avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, observing politeness in social interactions is imperative to support successful and respectful communication.

Ebsworth and Kodama (as cited in Azwan, 2018) stated that refusals in English are often expressed indirectly. For example: "Sorry, I'd love to, but I'm working then so I don't think I can make it. I could do it next week." The reason for investigating politeness is its relevance in English language learning, particularly in demonstrating linguistic expressions that help children understand and engage in communication (Azwan, 2018). When teachers use movement-based or interactive strategies in the classroom—such as asking students to introduce themselves in English or state where they come from—students are more likely to be engaged and active. These activities not only support language learning but also help manage classroom behavior, making the environment more orderly while reinforcing the importance of polite interaction.

The core problem identified in this study is the limited use of politeness strategies among students when engaging in conversations with their peers within the school environment. Specifically, students tend to demonstrate a lack of awareness and understanding in applying appropriate politeness strategies when making requests or refusals, which often results in interactions that are perceived as impolite or socially inappropriate. This issue highlights a gap in pragmatic competence that can affect both peer relationships and classroom communication. The scope of this study is limited to the examination of politeness strategies in students' requesting and refusing expressions, particularly within the classroom setting during English language learning activities.

This research was inspired by several previous studies on politeness strategies. Firinta Togatorop, in her study entitled "*Politeness Strategies Used in the Conversation sbetween the Students of Finance and Banking Department in Murni Sadar Polytechnic Pematangsiantar*",

analyzed four main types of politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's theory—Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off Record. Her findings revealed that students frequently used Positive and Negative Politeness strategies in conversation, with a tendency to apply politeness through clear, respectful, and context-aware utterances (Togatorop, 2019). Similarly, Imanuel Kamiasi in his research *"The Positive Politeness in Conversations Performed by the Students of English Study Program of Timor University"* focused on positive politeness in student interactions. His results showed various address terms such as greetings, thanking, requests, and suggestions, with greeting (27.27%) and question (40%) being the most dominant forms (Kamiasi, 2017). Another relevant study by Fahrul Syam entitled *"Politeness in Requesting and Refusing in Teacher's Instructions"* analyzed a teacher's use of politeness strategies during classroom instruction. The teacher predominantly used the Bald on Record strategy for clarity and assertiveness, especially in instructional contexts (Syam, 2015).

Unlike previous studies that have mainly examined general student interactions or teacher-centered discourse, this research specifically focuses on the use of politeness strategies in the speech acts of requesting and refusing among students during English classroom conversations at SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan. By centering on student-to-student interactions, the study reveals that while students exhibit an awareness of politeness norms—such as saying thank you or adjusting their behavior during discussions—their expressions often remain informal and heavily shaped by digital habits, peer dynamics, and environmental influences. This focused inquiry highlights the complex, context-dependent nature of Generation Z's politeness behavior in classroom settings. The significance of this research lies in its practical implications for language education, particularly in emphasizing the need for explicit instruction on pragmatic competence. Overall, this study underscores the pedagogical importance of teaching politeness in both requesting and refusing, as it fosters respectful and contextually appropriate communication among students and between students and teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry process that seeks a deep understanding of social phenomena in their natural setting (Noble & Smith, 2014). In this context, the researcher focused on politeness in requesting and refusing instructions among students during English language learning. The data were derived directly from real classroom activities, where the researcher observed the types of instructions used by students, the forms of politeness expressed, and the nature of their requests and refusals. The participants were students of class VII-A at SMP Swasta 24 Al-Washliyah Medan, selected due to their feasibility for conversational analysis in the learning process.

The main instrument in this research was the researcher himself, as qualitative methods rely heavily on the researcher's ability to collect, interpret, and analyze data. Following Sugiyono, the researcher must be validated in terms of readiness, understanding of qualitative methods, and knowledge of the research field. Data were collected through three instruments: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations helped determine whether students practiced politeness in making or refusing requests. Interviews, conducted in an open and unstructured manner, explored students' thoughts and experiences. Documentation included photographs and audio recordings to support observational and interview data. According to Sugiyono, these methods are vital steps in collecting credible data, with the researcher actively entering the field to gather meaningful insights (Sugiyono, 2015).

Data analysis followed the model of Miles and Huberman, involved three primary stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Creswell, 2014; Miles &

Huberman, 1994). Data reduction included summarizing, identifying essential themes, and organizing data relevant to the topic—especially regarding students' politeness in making or refusing requests. This process was guided by the research objectives. Next, the data display stage arranged information into coherent forms (e.g., tables, observations, or expression patterns) to facilitate analysis. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which involved interpreting the findings to answer the research questions. These conclusions often result in new insights or clarity on previously vague phenomena.

Ethical considerations were also carefully maintained throughout the research. The researcher sought formal permission from the school and obtained verbal or nonverbal consent from students to participate. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, students' real names were replaced with codes or abbreviations, and personal information was not disclosed. Furthermore, during documentation, students were informed about the use of photographs and recordings, which were taken in ways that protected their identity (e.g., capturing only their backs or omitting facial images). These measures ensured that the study upheld ethical research standards while respecting participants' rights and privacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Politeness

Politeness is a social rule that leads to matters relating to the way a person behaves naturally in social life and the friendly attitude shown to several people in front of him with the aim of respecting and respecting that person, so as to create comfortable and harmonious conditions. politeness is an obligation that must be done by every group from children to the elderly without any exception.

According to Oetomo (2012) polite is an attitude of respect and civilized in behavior, polite in speech, manners and good behavior according to local customs and culture what we have to do (Oetomo, 2012). Polite behavior reflects one's own behavior, because polite means respect, respect and order according to custom that we must do every time we meet other people as our form in respecting others. Disrespectful people usually shunned by others. We fellow humans have a desire to be appreciated, that is the reason why we must always be polite to others

Meanwhile, according to Mustari (2014) polite is someone who is smooth and kind from a grammatical point of view as well as the behavior of all people. Politeness can sacrifice oneself for the sake of society or others (Mustari, 2014). That's because those people already have solid rules, each of us only gets to participate. That is the essence of being polite, namely appropriate interpersonal behavior, local norms and customs.

Based on the explanation about politeness, it is concluded that Courtesy in Islam is courtesy consisting of 2 words, namely polite and courteous. Polite is respect with respect according to good customs (polite in refusing). While polite is good and refined manners and behavior, likes to help and have mercy (polite in helping).

According to Kurniasih (2014) as stated in Anggreni and Antara (2021), the indicators of politeness are (Anggreni & Antara, 2021; Kurniasih, 2014):

1. Respecting elders: Demonstrating respect towards older individuals, such as parents and teachers, by listening attentively, avoiding arguments, and speaking politely.
2. Avoiding the use of offensive, harsh, or arrogant language: Refraining from using rude, inappropriate, or boastful words in interactions with peers or adults.
3. Not spitting carelessly: maintaining cleanliness and public hygiene by not spitting in inappropriate or public places.
4. Not interrupting conversations: allowing others to speak without interruption, and

- waiting for one's turn to respond in discussions or conversations.
5. Saying "thank you" after receiving help: expressing gratitude verbally after receiving assistance or support from others.
 6. Practicing the 3s behavior (smile, greet, and say hello): showing friendliness and approachability by smiling, greeting others appropriately, and initiating polite interactions.
 7. Asking for permission before entering someone's room or borrowing belongings: respecting others' privacy and property by seeking permission before accessing personal spaces or items.
 8. Treating others the way one wants to be treated: displaying empathy and fairness by behaving toward others in a manner one would appreciate in return.

In the implementation of student manners, students can do it in many ways, such as saying greetings when they want to enter the classroom, greeting older people, praying in an orderly manner, not saying rude and high-pitched words to other people, be they are friends or older people. But in reality this has not been implemented perfectly in the character of students, including in junior high school.

The goal of politeness is to make all of the parties relaxed and comfortable with one another, these culturally defined standards at times may have manipulated to cause shame on a designated party. Being polite therefore consists of trying to save another face. There are some techniques to show politeness:

1. Expressing uncertainty and ambiguity through hedging and indirectness
2. Polite lying
3. Use of euphemism (which make use of ambiguity as well as connotation).
4. Preferring tag questions to direct statements, such as —You were at the store, weren't you?
5. Modal tags request information of which the speaker is uncertain, —You didn't go to the store yet, did you?
6. Affective tags indicate concern for the listener. —You haven't been here long, have you?
7. Softeners reduce the force of what would be a brusque demand. —hand me that thing, could you?
8. Facilitative tags invite the addressee to comment on the request being made, "You can do that, can't you?" (in journal Firinta Togatorop (2019 : 2)

B. Politeness in Requesting

Finocchiaro (as cited in Sumarsono, 2010, p. 199) identifies several types of directive speech acts, such as giving guidance, attempting to influence others, offering supplications, suggesting, requesting, warning, and asking for instructions. Based on this statement, it can be concluded that polite expressions often begin with phrases such as "asking for help" and "thanking." There are two main types of politeness in making requests, which will be elaborated in the following discussion.

1. Ask for Help

There are several polite ways to make a request in English. Here are some common expressions:

a. Please

Example: I need your help. Please get me some water.

b. Can you...

- Example:* Can you please get me some water?
- c. **Could you...**
Example: Could you get me some water?
- d. **Would you...**
Example: Would you do the dishes for Mom?
- e. **May I...**
Example: May I have the last bite of this chocolate?
- f. **Do you mind if...**
Example: Do you mind if you buy me some food?
- g. **I wonder if you could...**
Example: I wonder if you could buy me something from Korea.

2. Thanks

Chaer (2010:28) states that the illocutionary speech act besides saying something too express actions related to giving permission, say thank you, ordered, offered, and promises. And from this statement it can be concluded After we ask for help. So we don't forget to say thank you. Because saying thank you is a very important thing to appreciate other people. Here are the appropriate words of thanks to say:

- a. Thank you very much. /
Thank you very much for your kindness
- b. Thank you so much
Thank you so much for the help
- c. Thanks a lot..... :
Thanks a lot for the ride

C. Politeness in Refusing

Chaer (2010: 96) says basically rejecting speech is speech delivered by the interlocutor as a reaction to utterances issued by a speaker. Usually the form of speech is conveyed in refusing an invitation, order, gift, offer or reject the opinion of the group. And from that statement it can be concluded that in the refusal to have the same character to be expressed politely so that between the speaker and listeners accept each other. Thus, there was be no misunderstanding between them. Here are some examples of politely refusing sentences:

1. No thank you
2. I'm sorry, but.....
3. I'm afraid I can't do that
4. Maybe next time
5. Unfortunately
6. Let me think about it
7. Thank you so much, however
8. I would love to, but.....
9. It sounds great, but.....
10. How about....
11. I wish i could
12. sadly....
13. Have another plan
14. Honestly, i can't
15. I really appreciate it, but....

16. I'll get back to you
17. I don't think it's a good idea
18. Probably no
19. I think that's not possible
20. I'd rather no

D. Conversations

Conversations is interactive communication between two or more people. The development of conversational skills and etiquette is an important part of socialization. The development of conversational skills in a new language is a frequent focus of language teaching and learning. Conversation analysis is a branch of sociology which studies the structure and organization of human interaction, with a more specific focus on conversational interaction. The topic can change from one kind to another depending on the needs of the speakers to have the purpose (Togatorop, 2019)

The speakers should have strategies for sustaining the conversation. The grammar of the language is not enough to make the conversation run well. The speakers must have a kind of general knowledge about the various topics so that they can give, share and exchange the information in the conversation. The spoken language is of course more complex than the written language. In conversation, the two speakers should use their time effectively to achieve the goal of communication to serve the communicative function.

Conversation happens in any situation in daily life, it's a way for people to communicate with others, but every conversation has a different context based on the people who are involved in there. There are three kinds of conversation according to Togatorop (2019):

1. Face-to-face Conversation
Sometimes conversations just happen. Face-to-face conversation happens when someone comes over to one person and starts to have conversation. Then, the two of them plunged into a familiar discussion of recent activities, families, favorite bands or plans to be done. It seems effortless, but that is a real situation that the persons are not prepared for the conversation.
2. Phone conversations
Phone conversation is becoming the common conversation in global now. We are not only able to conversation in long distance areas, but also different places and times. In phone conversations, no cues from facial expressions and body language and the possibility of less privacy also risks disturbing others with the sound of the phone ringing. When we use phone conversations we need to be considered from others to the phone.
3. Instant Messaging Conversations
Instant Messaging Conversation (IM) is just similar to phone conversation. The thing that distinguishes it from the former is that the message conveyed is quite short. For example, SMS (short message service) provide in the mobile phone. There is no expression that can be shown and there are senders and receivers. They exchange information or messages in researcher language that later can be revised by others (Togatorop, 2019).

E. Observations Results on Learning

The observations results on Generation Z learning in the field. It is stated in the following table.

Table 1. Observations on Learning at SMP Swasta 24 Al-Washliyah Medan

Aspect	Notes
A Educator	
1 Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be attentive with preparing the class for learning -Conditioning students who are playing cellphones etc. -- Frees students, to speak, argue even though they look noisy/laugh. -Allows to open the cellphone when debriefing / learning takes place. -Reprimand if there are students who are not polite, say, get their feet up on chairs, and disturb their friends' learning.
2. Submission of Folders	-By explaining the material now with something that is done every day
3.Strategy/method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describes an object that is often used and a verb that is done every day -Discussion of verbs -And ask the students -Educators explain back / straighten answers
4. Auxiliary tools (media)	-Blackboard, markers for writing and making task steps
B Learners	
1. Attitude towards Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free while maintaining manners, words, and sometimes their behavior does not respect their students -Other students laugh when someone asks questions and answers in a unique, funny way but still conducive and critical. -Then the teacher sits together among the students.
2. Student Responses	- There are some students who play cellphones and chat behind them when the teacher is explaining
3. Discussion process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Respond to statements and questions -Conducive runs smoothly -Regular -Open the cellphone to look for material/understand material, so that you can always respond to your friends.
1. Learning media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Notebooks -worksheet book

2. senses used	- Hearing, seeing in seeing the teacher explains - Hearing, and observation in listening to the lecture system.
3. Discipline	Conducive - Some of the students pay attention enthusiastically, the teacher and some are noisy when the educator explains straightens the answers. -No one is late -The class is noisy because it is actively discussing -It went smoothly even though there was a little loud laughter and made learning noise but it didn't make learning difficult but it was the active expression of the students that made the class not stiff.
7. languages spoken	-Indonesian, English, remix.

F. Interview

In this process, the researchers conducted interviews for several days because it depended on the time and situation in the field, as follows:

1) First day

When the researcher came to school on Thursday, exactly 1 week after submitting a research permit with the previous Principal. Then the researcher coordinated with the father who was appointed by the principal to help researchers regarding the respondents, including selecting students from different classes. The researcher made direct introductions with 6 people at that time in the classroom that had been provided by the school, after making introductions and a little pleasantries. Time went by with 6 respondents until it showed 16.30 WIB or approximately 2:13:26 hours of recording on a tape recorder, almost going home at that time, thank God the interview was over. And the following is the result of re-recording from one of the 6 interview respondents in the form of a conversation:

Q: Assalamualaikum deck. Let's just talk casually. OK.

S : Waalaikumsalam sis

Q: What's his name, if I may ask.

S : Anggi Pratama

Q: What class?

S: 7 - 1

Q: okay. Let's start yaa..

Q: I'm sure you've heard that schools are now one of the biggest investments, all countries also recognize that. One of them is finding a job so it's easy for sure. Well now I want to ask you. So you went to school because of your parents' advice or because all the school families just went along, or what?

S : because of my own desire to learn sis.

Q : OK, next question. What is your aim at school?

S : Study so I can go to university and after graduation get a better job sis.

Q : You live in the millennial generation or what people say is Generation Z. This means you can't live without the internet, power outages can all turn off because there is

no network. And we also know that the shortcomings in this generation are the lack of respect for other people, including parents. How about you yourself, about the manners that should be done? And how do you think school should be?

S: It depends on the person sis, for me maybe the entertainment is chatting with friends, playing with friends, or sometimes bringing a cellphone to take pictures of nature. So just adjust to the conditions.

Q: Do we need to add other rules related to improving morals and manners, because Generation Z is polite or their morals are lacking, right?

S: Really

Q: Do you think schools should also have lessons on manners, like moral education first and then other lessons like that?

S: it's necessary sis, because today's children are more or less polite to their parents

Q: "So now cellphones are like being indicated for phubbing behavior, do you know that? For example, if you are together but busy playing your own cellphone, or if you don't have anyone to chat/need, you pretend to be busy playing your cellphone, even though it's quiet!" So, how do you react to it?

S: I feel that I have prestige too sis, sometimes but, but if a friend invites me to chat and it's fun to talk, I put my cellphone in my bag sis

Q: Does the rapid flow of science and technology make it necessary for schools to adjust their curricula, for junior high schools? Like adjusting your capacity in learning? The goal is to develop according to the stages? Maybe in the past it was more lecturing, now it's student centered?

S: in my opinion sis, now the system is self-study because of technological developments, so we are lazy to look. After all, everything is on the internet, right? In the past, you have to look for it in the library first. And if you go back to the old days, it's difficult for you to find answers to our assignments

Q: How do you behave when you meet other students at a school?

S: say hello sis

P: "Now we know that there are so many materials given at school! in your own opinion, is it really necessary to feel all that?"

S: necessary

P: OK, last question. Many of the problems above are related to the decency of Generation Z's behavior. What are your hopes for the learning that takes place in class?

S: if you say there is hope, yes there is. What is it... the problem is that today's literacy is rather difficult because the children are too lazy to read. It's like a teacher giving out lots of assignments just now (try searching on Google) so a teacher like that should tell us to look for the answers in the book.

P: ohh, so you're like a teacher who has to direct all of you? S: yes sis.

P: Thank you .

2) The second day

On the day after the first interview, to be exact the next day the researcher made observations of Mr. Yasir's class in class VII-1. Then the researchers came in, to be exact, Friday 19 May 2023, finished 1 hour before going home. When making observations, the researcher found several things outside the list of observation points in the instrument table. Like during the learning process, there was one of the students

who sat in the back seat playing gadgets, from his style the researcher suspected they were playing games/a kind of chat via social media. This incident took place when the learning procession was carried out by the teacher in front of the class, while all the focus was on the future, there were only a few students whose focus seemed very different. In addition, after the teacher finished giving them lessons, the question and answer session began,

G. Discussions

Learning, namely a process of transferring knowledge from educators to students through the methods, strategies, and skills of an educator assisted by adequate supporting media/facilities. Like people who are going on vacation by adjusting the conditions of the destination with appropriate clothing and people who have the same interests. For example, if the interests are not the same, dynamics was arise along the way, just like a paradigm that comes from the process of one's experience in building views on an object.

Education cannot be separated from tools in assisting learning, also known as media, because it is closely related to learning in the 21st century. On the other hand, approaches, strategies, and evaluation models are one of the strongest aspects of the learning process. And in this learning, it also involves politeness in Requesting and Refusing between teacher to student and student to student along with the researcher in a concise form of conversation as follows:

1. Requesting

a. Between Master and Student

Mr. yasir : Anggi, can you help me to check this Absent? Students : Sure, sir. {I can do that}. (students respond 4) Mr. Yasir : Thank you Anggi, I really appreciate that Student : you're welcome

In the conversation it can be seen that a teacher asks students for help and students want to help him

b. Between Student to Student

Student : can i do the homework with you together ? Other Students : okay.

Student : Thank you

Other Student : you're welcome

2. Politeness in Refusing

1) Between Master and Student

Student : May I help you to bring your books, sir

Mr. Yasir : you are very kind, I can bring it by myself, thanks

This interaction illustrates a polite refusal from the teacher, maintaining respect and appreciation for the student's offer.

Based on the observations conducted at SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan, the classroom atmosphere during the learning process was characterized by a relatively open and interactive dynamic between teachers and students. The teacher displayed a flexible attitude, allowing students to express their opinions freely, even when the environment became noisy due to laughter or discussions. While the teacher provided space for students to use mobile phones for learning purposes, such as searching for material online during debriefing, disciplinary boundaries were maintained. The teacher would reprimand students for inappropriate behaviors, such as placing their feet on chairs, disrupting peers, or using impolite language. These actions indicated the teacher's effort to instill politeness and classroom order, while

simultaneously adapting to the learning preferences of Generation Z.

Students, on the other hand, showed mixed responses in terms of politeness. While some displayed respect by engaging in discussions, listening attentively, and responding critically, others appeared distracted, chatting or using their phones during explanations. Interestingly, humor was a frequent part of interaction, where some students laughed at peers' unique or funny answers. Despite this, the atmosphere remained conducive to learning, suggesting that the noise was more a reflection of student engagement rather than disruption. The presence of the teacher among students, sitting and interacting casually, further supported the development of positive rapport and reduced hierarchical distance, which is essential for fostering respectful communication.

In terms of politeness in requesting, students were observed to participate actively in class discussions and ask questions. Their way of making requests appeared to align with positive politeness strategies, such as showing solidarity and maintaining group inclusion. Teachers, too, employed bald-on-record strategies when requesting student cooperation or correcting behavior, which is acceptable within the institutional setting where authority is recognized. These strategies, while direct, were perceived as appropriate due to the established teacher-student relationship and the collective goals of the classroom environment.

Regarding politeness in refusing, insights from student interviews revealed that students tended to express disagreement or refusal indirectly. For instance, one student mentioned that although using mobile phones in class may appear disrespectful, it is sometimes necessary for seeking information or capturing moments with friends. Rather than denying the issue outright, the student nuanced their position by explaining the context, showing an effort to maintain face and avoid confrontation. This type of refusal aligns with off-record politeness strategies, which aim to convey disagreement or limitation without overtly challenging the interlocutor.

The influence of technology and social media on politeness behavior was also evident. Students demonstrated awareness of phenomena such as "phubbing," where one ignores their surroundings in favor of mobile phone use. Although some admitted to engaging in this behavior, they also emphasized that they would set aside their phones when conversations with friends became enjoyable. This shows a level of social awareness and the ability to adjust behavior according to context, reflecting a dynamic understanding of politeness norms shaped by digital culture.

The learning environment at SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan highlights a complex interplay between traditional values of politeness and the evolving communication styles of Generation Z. While students exhibit basic politeness norms in both requesting and refusing, their expressions are often mediated by their comfort with informality and technology. The teacher's role in modeling and reinforcing polite behavior remains critical, especially in balancing authority with openness. These findings underscore the importance of integrating moral and character education into the learning process to help students navigate social interactions with greater sensitivity and ethical consideration.

The findings of this study align closely with Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987), which asserts that individuals employ politeness strategies to maintain face and mitigate potential threats in social interactions. These strategies are essential in preserving interpersonal harmony and reducing the imposition of requests or refusals. In the context of classroom interactions, students' use of polite expressions when requesting or refusing reflects their awareness of the need to respect others' social face, as theorized by Brown and Levinson.

In addition, the findings resonate with Holmes (2017), who underscores the integral role of politeness in facilitating effective communication, especially within educational settings. Holmes views politeness not as a mere social courtesy, but as a crucial communicative

competence that fosters inclusive and respectful dialogue in diverse classrooms. Similarly, Khamis (2019) contributes to the discussion by examining the influence of digital communication on politeness practices among Generation Z. While she acknowledges a decline in conventional face-to-face politeness, Khamis highlights the emergence of alternative forms of polite expression through digital cues such as emojis, suggesting an evolving landscape of politeness norms.

Moreover, Alharbi (2019) advocates for the explicit teaching of politeness strategies in education, arguing that such instruction can significantly improve students' communicative abilities and interpersonal relationships. This perspective supports the practical implications of the current study, which emphasizes the role of instruction in developing students' pragmatic awareness (Alharbi, 2019). Finally, Kurniasih and Sani (2017) emphasize the importance of cultural context in understanding and teaching politeness (Kurniasih & Sani, 2017). They argue that cultural norms shape the interpretation and practice of politeness, making it essential for educators to consider students' sociocultural backgrounds when addressing communicative behavior in language education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from classroom observations and interviews at SMP Al-Washliyah 24 Medan, it can be concluded that the politeness behavior of Generation Z students in requesting and refusing is present but often expressed in informal and context-dependent ways. While students demonstrate awareness of respectful interaction—such as saying thank you, responding to peers, and adjusting behavior during discussions—they also show tendencies shaped by digital culture, such as phubbing or casual speech patterns. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding and modeling polite communication through both verbal correction and inclusive classroom strategies. Overall, the study highlights the need for integrating explicit politeness instruction within the school curriculum to foster students' pragmatic competence, particularly in navigating social norms and building respectful communication in both traditional and digital learning environments.

One limitation of this study is its narrow scope, focusing only on a single school with a limited number of observational and interview sessions, which may not fully represent the diverse characteristics of Generation Z students across different educational, cultural, and regional contexts. Additionally, the data collection relied primarily on qualitative methods without incorporating quantitative instruments that could provide statistical generalization. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample across multiple schools and regions to capture broader variations in politeness behavior. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, such as surveys with larger populations and discourse analysis, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how students employ politeness strategies in both offline and digital interactions.

It is recommended that educators become more attentive and proactive in observing Generation Z, especially in contexts related to learning and classroom interaction. By examining their learning behaviors, preferences, and communication styles within the school environment, educators can gain deeper insights into the expectations and needs of this generation. Moreover, it is essential not only to understand the general characteristics of Generation Z but also to explore their engagement with digital technologies, including how they interact with gadgets and navigate online platforms such as social media. Such comprehensive understanding can inform more relevant and responsive teaching strategies that align with the realities of students' lives both inside and outside the classroom.

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