



## The Principle of Politeness: Realization of Communication Between Children and Parents

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### Abstract

This study examines the realization of communication in the family, especially in the form of speech between parents and children and vice versa. This study is relevant in the context of the social life of modern society which has changed due to developments in education and social fields. This knowledge is very important, by knowing the speech and politeness principles in speaking in the family, we will be able to adjust and behave according to the rules and psychological conditions of the interlocutor as a reflection of how to get along in a pragmatic society. This research is conducted as a case study of family speech in which there are values of politeness and manners as guidelines for human interaction. The presentation of this research is focused on the ethics of speech between a mother and a child related to the principle of politeness in the pragmatic branch of language. This study is conducted with descriptive analysis which can then produce the value of speech ethics in the family related to the principle of politeness and can be used as a reference in life.

Keywords: Ethics; Principles of Politeness; Politeness; Speech.

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### 1. Introduction

In daily life, communication is not only a basic human need, but also a basic foundation in the family, especially between parents and children. The realization of effective communication between the two is very instrumental in the formation of character (Dewa & Ndlovu, 2022), values and emotional tranquility of children. Speech ethics is also known as speech or speech acts and is an action expressed through language accompanied by gestures and attitudes of the limbs to support the achievement of the speaker's intent (Rismayani, 2024).

Pragmatically according to Calmettes (2011) and Yusuf & Rohmaniyah (2025), there are three types of actions that can be realized by a speaker, namely: acts of locution, acts of illocution and perlocution. Locution is an action that produces phonetic, syntactic and semantic utterances. While

illocutionary acts are related to the intent and purpose of the speaker in pronouncing something, such as commanding, inviting, asking and so on. On the other hand, perlocutionary acts are the effects of these utterances on listeners, including pleasure, fear and others.

Pragmatics in Arabic is also known as the science of 'amali or nafi' (عَمَلِي / نَفْعِي). The term 'amali basically means practical and tends towards real action (Ariani et al., 2021), while nafi' means benefits or benefits that often lead to real-world benefits in personal and social life. In today's social development, individuals are required to actively participate in community life, while within the family itself there are rules that regulate behavior based on values, norms, and social roles (du Plessis & Marais, 2017; Osborne, 2007). Assistance and role modeling from parents have a very important role (Li et al., 2018; Sethi & Scales, 2020).

Parents are the first educators in a child's life as a milestone of manners and socialization in society (Boonk et al., 2021; Hay et al., 2016). The exemplary language politeness of children basically depends on parents who live together in a family. Basically, the good and bad ethics and politeness of children from an early age tend to follow the personality of their parents (Kim, 2020; Pratiwi & Rianto, 2023). When carrying out social relations in society, ethics are needed as guidelines for good life and habits, which can be adopted and continued to the next generation (Ainah, 2023; Hilali, 2023). In reality, many lives today deviate from the principles of politeness and regional customs.

Customs are not a branch of linguistics, but it is a cultural element that is closely related to the linguistic context because language is the mediator in expressing, presenting, and preserving the values and norms of society (Fakhrudin & Lukita, 2023; Rismayani, 2024). For example, today many students and teenagers who speak words are not in accordance with the norms and levels, as well as various code switching and reversal with the principles of politeness in the ethics of speaking in proper society. Among teenagers, there are also many social deviations that are dominated by the development of science and technology. Criminality and social deviations between an educator and students are rampant due to undirected knowledge and speech and tend to have a negative impact.

This study aims to examine how social relationships influence communication patterns between parents and children in the family environment. The main focus of this study is the analysis of language use that incorporates ethics and manners in daily interactions. The researcher employs the theory of politeness principles to explore how children and parents realize the values of politeness in their speech. In this context, language not only functions as a tool for communication but also as a form of social behavior influenced by cultural and environmental factors. Therefore, the use of language within the family should consider both linguistic and socio-cultural aspects to ensure that the communication established fosters politeness and harmony.

## 2. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach because the main focus is to understand and describe social phenomena in depth, especially related to speech ethics in family interactions between parents and children. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meaning behind utterances, norms, and communication habits that cannot always be revealed through quantitative approaches. This study centers on the application and violation of Leech's (1983) principles of politeness which include six maxims: tact, generosity, respect, humility, appropriateness, and sympathy. These principles are applied to analyze the language ethics between parents and children. The data source of this study is spoken language in daily conversations and was obtained through participatory observation techniques, notes, and unstructured interviews. The focus of the study consists of 8 parents and children of elementary/middle school age who live in the Setugu II neighborhood, Lembayan sub-district. The selection of subjects was done by purposive sampling along with daily

verbal information related to the realization of parent-child communication and active participation in the sociocultural context. In addition, a snowball approach was used as an additional subject based on parents' recommendations. Data collection was carried out for one month with the intensity of observation three to four times a week at the center of family interaction, such as: at home, place of study / Qur'an Education Park, at the mosque, and others. The researcher acted as the main instrument with the help of recording devices and observation guidelines to collect data from various situational contexts such as during learning, playing, returning home from school, and other family activities. To minimize subjective bias, the researcher applied data triangulation through direct observation, interviews and documentation and conducted intersubjective validation by asking for peer opinions regarding the interpretation of the data obtained.

Situational contexts such as during study, play, after school, and other family activities were chosen because they can represent common and relevant situations in students' daily lives and language use can be observed scientifically. Learning contexts can show formal interactions between students and teachers that are closely related to the principle of academic politeness. Play is an action that can prove the principle of politeness between peers informally and socially. After-school activities reflect interactions between children and adults, both parents and neighbors of various ages. Meanwhile, family activities illustrate the closest project in the principle of politeness between parents and children. By linking these contexts, a full and comprehensive picture of the principle of politeness can be presented to show the real understanding and application of the principle of politeness.

Data analysis was conducted by referring to Austin and Searle's speech act theory, which separates locution, illocution and perlocution. Each utterance is identified by its type and then grouped by its function based on the context of the interaction. After that, the application and violation of these maxims are analyzed using Leech's (1983) politeness principles to find out the language ethics applied in communication between parents and children. The data were analyzed inductively by grouping the utterances to find patterns of compliance and violation of politeness maxims that occur in family communication. For example, polite expressions such as "*mohon maaf, ibu mau pergi ke mana?*" indicate compliance with the maxims of politeness, while high tones or unwarranted interruptions indicate violation of the maxims of politeness. These forms are analyzed based on their frequency and arrangement to draw conclusions about the tendency of using the principle of politeness in communication between parents and children. This research was conducted from January to March 2025 in Setugu II Neighborhood, Lembayan Subdistrict, which influences the violation of maxims, such as age, psychology, and speech culture in the family.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Results**

The results of data analysis show that speech ethics in the family, especially between parents and children are strongly influenced by the principles of politeness in linguistic pragmatics. This speech ethics is formed in the types of speech acts, such as: locution, illocution and perlocution. In practice, the speech of parents and children is mostly in the form of declarative and imperative sentences that function as a means of information, commands and prohibitions. Besides, other pragmatic functions including asking, apologizing, criticizing and responding in the form of rejection, approval and acceptance of criticism also appear dominant. All of these speech acts contain maxims of politeness, including maxims of wisdom, generosity, respect, modesty, compatibility and sympathy. Thus, speech interaction not only functions as a communication tool but also plays an active role as a means of internalizing politeness values and social ethics. Maxims of politeness in family speech:

##### **3.1.1 Tact Maxim**

In this maxim, a speaker and speech partner must maximize the benefits of the other party or interlocutor rather than their own benefits.

- Child : *Mohon maaf, ibu mau pergi ke mana? (I'm sorry, where are you going?)*  
 Mother : *Ibu mau pergi ke pasar dik. (I'm going to the market)*  
 Child : *Ibu, nanti jika pergi ke pasar adik mohon minta dibelikan sesuatu. (Mom, if you go to the market, please ask to buy something).*  
 Mother : *Ya. (Yes)*

The child in the conversation above shows politeness because he does not ask directly, but starts with apologizing, which shows wisdom and respect. While the next sentence in the child's speech, shows a request that is not pushy but gives the mother the opportunity to consider it and be gentle.

### 3.1.2 Generosity Maxim

This principle maximizes speech or expressions that prioritize respect for others or speech partners. Study time narration.

- Mother : *Wow, tulisanmu bagus sekali. (Wow, your writing is really good)*  
 Child : *Iya, aku khan...anak pandai. (Yes, I'm a smart kid.)*  
 Mother : *Coba tulis kembali dibukumu, nanti ibu beri sesuatu. (Try writing again in your book, later I'll give you something.)*  
 Child : *G usah bu. (No need mom.)*

The mother in the above conversation is polite because she tries to maximize the benefit (-) of her interlocutor. The child in the first conversation applies pragmatic paradox by trying to minimize self-esteem, while the speech partner in the second conversation violates pragmatic paradox by trying to maximize self-esteem, this is considered impolite.

### 3.1.3 Approbation Maxim

The acceptance maxim is expressed with commissive and impositive utterances. Storytelling when you want to play.

- Mother : *Mau kemana, nak? Where are you going, son?*  
 Child : *Mau ke rumah Bibi, ibu... Tadi beliau telepon mau ngobrol, katanya saya rajin sekali bantu ibu.. Ibu saya pamit dulu ya.... (I'm going to my aunt's house, mom... She called to talk to me, she said I'm very diligent in helping her... Mom, I'll take my leave first...)*

The utterance above is considered impolite because the mother tries to maximize her own benefit and make it difficult for the child.

### 3.1.4 Modesty Maxim

Self-centered humility maxim. Narration of time on task.

- Child : *Ibu tuliskan tugas ini. (Mom, write down this assignment.)*  
 Mother : *Tulis sendiri donk, adik sudah besar dan mandiri. (Write it yourself, you're already big and independent).*  
 Child : *Saya tidak bisa menulis bagus sendiri. (I can't write well by myself).*

In the child's statement above, it shows humility and not being arrogant, while the parents respond with support and constructive advice and strengthen the closeness between the two.

### 3.1.5 Agreement Maxim

The maxim of compatibility outlines every speaker and interlocutor to maximize the compatibility between the two parties, and minimize the incompatibility between them. Playtime storytelling.

*Child : Ibu lelah ya, habis memasak? (Are you tired, after cooking?)*  
*Mother : Tidak, tidak capek... kok. (No, not tired... really)*

The above narrative shows the harmony between mother and child. This can be seen from the child's speech which shows his attention by asking questions, while the mother responds with pleasant sentences and creates a comfortable atmosphere despite feeling tired. Their interaction strengthens family relationships by enhancing emotional connection and encouraging positive and harmonious communication.

#### Sympathy Maxim

This maxim is expressed with expressive and assertive speech just like the maxim of compatibility, the maxim of acceptance and the maxim of humility. Happy time storytelling

*Mother : Selamat ya dik dapat piala. (Congratulations, you got the trophy)*  
*Child : Terima kasih banyak bu.... (Thank you very much mom...)*

From the above, children will be motivated because parents show positive sympathy towards children, while children respond politely and respectfully. This can create a sense of being valued and loved and create a loving atmosphere.

### 3.1.6 Politeness Maxim Violation:

#### Tact Maxim Violation

The tact maxim outlines that speech act participants should minimize others' losses or maximize others' gains. Storytelling when going home from school.

*Child : Mau beli jajan tidak boleh, beli mainan tidak boleh. (You can't buy snacks, you can't buy toys).*  
*Mother : Kalau beli buku, penghapus atau yang lain yang berguna boleh, itu semua buat adik. (If you want to buy books, erasers or other useful things, you can, it's all for your brother).*

#### Generosity Maxim Violation

Information in the form of utilization of the interlocutor's situation is caused by the information provided taking advantage of the position given or offered so that it can easily provide information according to the heart's desire. Time narration in a clothing store

*Child : Ibu,, dhik Fida tidak usah dibelikan baju, bajuku masih banyak. (Mom, sister Fida doesn't need to buy clothes, I still have a lot of clothes).*  
*Mother : Tidak apa-apa. (It's okay).*

#### Approbation Maxim Violation

Information that offends the interlocutor is caused by the information provided that makes the interlocutor feel bad. Storytelling when coming home from school

*Child : Pasti tidak dibelikan jajan, tidak boleh main, tidak boleh lihat televisi. (You can't buy snacks, you can't play, you can't watch television).*

#### Simplicity Maxim Violation

Information that offends the interlocutor is caused by the information provided that makes the interlocutor feel bad). Storytelling in the kitchen

*Mother : Adhik coba dicuci piringnya. (Sister try to wash the dishes).*

*Child : Ahh, aku kurang bersih mencucinya. (Ahh, I'm not clean enough to wash them).*

#### *Agreement Maxim Violation*

Information in the form of contradictory things is caused because the information provided is the opposite of the context being discussed. Storytelling when the child is taking a bath

*Mother : Wahh, bersih sekali mandinya...sampai giginya masih berbau. (Wow, what a clean bath...until his teeth still smell).*

#### *Sympathy Maxim Violations*

Congratulating someone who is or has just been happy, and offering condolences or sympathy to someone who has suffered a disaster are also ways that language speakers maintain relationships between them. Speech while watching television..

*Mother : Selamat ya, tugasmu banyak sekali...nanti biar dimarahi ibu guru. (Congratulations, you have a lot of work to do...I'll get scolded by the teacher).*

Based on the various narrations in the realization of communication between parents and children above, it can be concluded that the principle of politeness plays an active role in maintaining communication harmony between family members. The realization of the maxims of politeness such as the maxims of wisdom, generosity, respect, simplicity, compatibility, and so on can create an atmosphere full of empathy, mutual respect and openness. On the other hand, violation of these maxims is likely to cause estrangement and break social relations in the family and society. Therefore, it is important for each family member to build polite and caring communication in order to achieve a harmonious family.

### **3.2 Discussion**

The results of the data obtained on speech ethics in the family show that there are various speech ethics and maxims of linguistic pragmatics politeness principles. Speech ethics in children are reflected through acts of locution, illocution and perlocution (Congdon, 2017; Shofty et al., 2022; Torrau, 2020). Each sentence context contains certain intentions that show the value of politeness, including advice, prohibition, and so on that show harmony in the family (Ariani et al., 2021; Nirwaningtyas & Yanti, 2024). This is found in the functions of speech between a child and a parent. The main functions of speech when viewed from the speaker's side are the function of stating (declarative) (Ebenezer Bonyah et al., 2023; Hilali, 2023), the function of asking (interrogative), the function of ordering (imperative) including the function of prohibiting, the function of apologizing and the function of criticizing. When viewed from the speech partner's side is the function of comment, the function of answering, the function of agreeing including the function of rejecting, the function of accepting or rejecting criticism.

Violation of the maxim of wisdom occurs when speech acts do not pay attention to the interests of speech partners, or instead maximize the benefits for themselves without considering the impact on the interlocutor (Mulyatna et al., 2021; Mumford et al., 2017). Information in the form of orders in the family is conveyed based on the roles and relationships between family members which are influenced by the situation and the prevailing communication norms. Violation of the maxim of generosity occurs in information in the form of utilization of the situation in the family environment due to the information provided taking advantage of the position given or offered so that it can easily provide information according to the heart's desire.



Violations of the maxims of politeness in family communication can occur, for example, when children complain sarcastically because they are not allowed to buy something or when parents use sarcastic sentences when reprimanding children. Another situation arises when family members overemphasize individual achievements or show indifference to others (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). This illustrates a lack of honor, sympathy and harmony in speech. Aspects of family communication patterns, age, emotional state, and the influence of technology and media contribute to shaping the way language is spoken between family members. These findings prioritize the importance of speech ethics in creating harmonious and respectful relationships.

#### 4. Conclusion

The ethics of language in the family plays a crucial role in building harmonious and respectful relationships among family members. The application of pragmatic politeness principles, such as locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary intentions, clearly reflects the values of politeness in everyday communication, especially in interactions between children and parents. The speech functions that emerge, such as stating, asking, commanding, apologizing, and criticizing, illustrate the dynamic relationships filled with meaning and purpose. However, violations of politeness maxims, such as the maxim of wisdom and generosity, can occur when speech fails to consider the interests of the interlocutor, or when information is conveyed with the intention of maximizing personal gain without considering its impact on others. Violations of these maxims often lead to the use of sarcasm, overemphasis on individual achievements, or indifference to others' feelings, ultimately damaging the harmony and respect within the family. Factors such as family communication patterns, age differences, emotional states, and the influence of technology and media also shape the way language is used among family members. Therefore, maintaining language ethics is essential for fostering communication that is respectful, empathetic, and harmonious within the family environment.

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