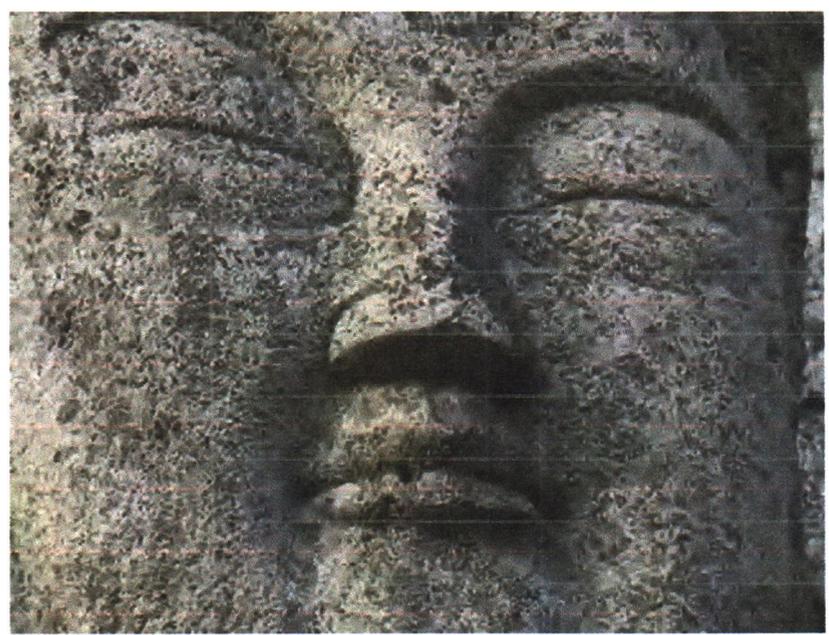


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Managing Respect among English Students in Social Media Conversations (Whatsapp Chats) through Polite Expressions

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Abstract

This paper explores the expressions employed by English students in managing their respect in their conversation in social media, in this case the WhatsApp chats. This paper was based on the descriptive-qualitative study conducted at Universitas Negeri Makassar in 2018. The subject of this research is the English students of the Graduate Program of Universitas Negeri Makassar. To collect data, the chats of the English students in WhatsApp when communicating to each other were collected and transcribed. Politeness strategies of the English students were explored and discussed in relation to the “face-saving view” of Brown and Levinson (1987). Findings show that English students applied several strategies in expressing politeness in the ways they were asking questions, requesting, and refusing. The strategies can be seen in the forms of greetings, thanks, apologies, some identity markers, such as the use of address terms and some terms

from the students' regional language. In addition, the students applied humor and small talk as the ways to be polite. Those strategies were used each other to support their politeness expressions in order to create good conversations. Findings from this study become a reference for study of politeness in a different context of speech situation. This study shows that although English students were subject to high technology of online communication, some strategies to show respect are still applied for the sake of good interaction and mutual understanding.

Keywords: *polite expressions, politeness, politeness strategies, WhatsApp chats, social media*

Introduction

For over decades, politeness had attracted the attention of many scholars especially in the field of sociolinguistics and anthropolinguistics. A number of studies have dealt with politeness in different settings of communication (Nor & Aziz, 2010; Senowarsito, 2010; Izadi, 2013; Zander, 2013; Maros & Rosli, 2017; Fenclova & Horova, 2017; Sukarno, 2018; Jazeri, Sukarsono, & Susanto, 2020).). These politeness studies confirmed that politeness is needed as a strategy to build good communication and to create effective interaction.

Early researchers had noticed the important roles of politeness in communication. Lakoff (1976, p. 64) interprets politeness as “forms of behaviour which have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction”. Holmes (1995, pp. 4-5) describes politeness as “behaviour which is somewhat formal and distancing, where the intention is not to intrude or impose”. According to her, “being polite means expressing respect towards the person you are talking to and avoiding offending them”. Sifianou (1992, p. 82) also tries to see politeness as a means of “restraining feelings and emotions in order to avoid conflict” and more as “a means of expressing them”. Whereas according to Yule (1996), politeness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction in human interaction by minimizing potential conflict. In other words, politeness helps to avoid conflict which may possibly happens in daily life,

especially in communication. Politeness in fact is one of social phenomenon that plays important roles in human interaction.

Due to high advances in the use of online communication, discussion of language use in online communication then also becomes an interest of scholars. Locher (2010) argues that online communication tends to develop its own set of communicative norms and practices due to factors such as the merging of public/private audiences and the multimodal capabilities of digital media, and as digitally mediated communication has increased and evolved, the ways that we navigate the expectations of (im)politeness and interpret others' behavior in digital contexts has increasing importance in our digital world. A study by Stapa and Shaari (2012) had noticed that there are some features of language use in online communication such as the use of spelling innovations and modifications, combinations of letter and number homophone, reduction or omission of vowels, replacement of <s> with <z>, the use of one letter to represent a word, the use of playful jargons, the use of acronyms and abbreviations and the use of emoticons. Idris and Ghani (2012) in their study show that Facebook postings encourage active participation, interaction and construction of knowledge. These facts show that the ways people communicate in online communication with their own features may bring effects on the function of communication.

Some studies were conducted to see the politeness expressions as one communication strategy in online communication. A study was conducted by Zena, Maros, & Nor (2012) who studied the politeness used by Arab students in their e-mails and found that politeness strategies help Arab students to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation in their communication of their emails. In addition, Maros & Rosli (2017) proved that politeness strategies have crucial functions on the ways students communicate in social media (twitters). These studies show that politeness as one strategy of communication is also needed in online communication.

One of the advances of technology in online communication can be seen in terms of the use of social media network, in which one of them is the use of WhatsApp. This application is so popular among students, especially because they need to communicate freely and easily for their needs in campus and in their daily life. It is interesting to see

how the students communicate using WhatsApp in their daily life and to depict they ways they manage their respect in their conversations.

For that purpose, the study in this paper addresses the strategies of the students, in this case the English students in communication, especially in the way they manage their respect to each other. It is the goal of this paper to explore the ways that the context of social media influences and reflects the ways that politeness as a pragmatic device is conceptualized, negotiated and enacted in digital interaction. Findings from this study become a reference for study of politeness in a different context of speech situation. As a part of character building, the study of politeness, especially among English students is needed to still maintain their polite behavior among the high advances of technology.

Methods

The study applied descriptive qualitative design. According to Gay, Mills & Airasian (2006), the qualitative method deals with the collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive, narrative and visual data in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest. In this research, the qualitative design was employed by the researcher to explore the strategies applied by the students in expressing politeness in their WhatsApp chats.

This study was conducted among the English students of the Graduate program of the State University of Makassar in 2017. To collect data, chats in WhatsApp by the students in some groups were collected and transcribed. The data were collected by screen shooting and capturing the pictures of certain chats that meet the criteria for the study. In this study, the collected chats were transcribed into text and the texts were then analysed using a discourse analysis approach.

The collected data were then transcribed and analyzed based on the politeness strategies framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). There are seventy five extracts resulted from the screenshots of the WhatsApp chats among English students. The transcribed extracts were then selected based on the purpose of this study, that is the strategies for expressing politeness. Fifteen extracts were chosen as representatives of the data that show politeness expressions. Those extracts were then interpreted, elaborated for analysis, and reported. The data analysis applied the techniques of Discourse Analysis,

which consist of data collection, data, selection, data transcription, and data interpretation (Wood & Kroger, 2000). These WhatsApp chats provided the explorations of language uses in a particular context, which may bring significant contribution to the process of analyzing the meaning and context as usually examined in doing discourse analysis.

Results

This part presents the WhatsApp chats among the students that employ some strategies of politeness. Some of the extracts can be seen in the following examples with MS as a message sender and MR as a message receiver:

Asking Questions

Extract 1

MS: Assalamualaikum, Miss Hen, jam berapa ke kampus?

“Peace be upon you, Miss Hen, What time are you going to the campus?”

MR: Waalaikumsalam Miss

“Peace be upon you, Miss”

In this chat, MS asked a question to MR. In order to be indirect, MS applied Islamic greeting “*Assalamualaikum*” (peace be upon you) and an address term “*Miss Hen*” to minimize the impoliteness due to the direct question asked by MS. It can be seen that greeting and address term were applied in the same time in the beginning of the chats among the students. Another example can be seen in the following extract:

Extract 2

MS: Assalamu Alaikum Kak. Saya Hilda. Afwan mengganggu. Sudah ada MC nya Kak. Kpn bisa latihannya Kak ?

“Peace be upon you, Older Sister. I am Hilda. I am sorry [I] disturbed [you]. [we] have already got the MC [master of ceremony]. When can we have the training, Older Sister?”

MR: Waalaikumsalam. Kpn acara ta dek?

“Peace be upon you too. When is the activity, Younger Sister?”

MS: Insya Allah tgl 25 Kak

“Hopefully, God permits, on 25th, Older Sister”

In the dialogue above, MS used the Islamic greeting to open the dialogue, *“Assalamualaikum”* (Peace be upon you). After that MS introduced herself *“Saya Hilda”* (I am Hilda) and apologized by saying *“Afwan mengganggu”* (I am sorry [I] disturbed [you]). She also explained what she has done by saying *“sudah ada MC nya Kak”* ([we] have already got the MC [master of ceremony]). After that, she asked the receiver’s time *“Kpn bisa latihannya Kak?”* (When can we have the training, Older Sister?). In this dialogue, it can be seen that the speaker, MS, applied many kinds of polite strategies in the chats. As younger speaker, she applied address term *“Kak”* (Older Sister). She also applied Islamic greeting to begin the chat. Before coming to the intention of the chat, she also apologized and introduced her name. These strategies were all employed by the speaker MS to be polite in her chat. Conversely, MR applied polite strategies too. She responded the greeting by saying *“Walaikumsalam”* (Peace be upon you too). Next she answer the question by asking more question *“Kpn acara ta, Dek?”* (When is your activity, Younger Sister?). This question showed that MR paid attention to MS’s question. She also applied Bugis polite pronoun *“ta”* (we inclusive) instead of *“mu”* (you) to address MS. Also, it can be seen that MR applied intimate address term *“Dek”* (Younger Sister). Therefore, in this chat, it can be seen that both speakers were trying to apply polite strategies in asking and answering the question by applying greeting, apologizing, and using polite address and intimate address terms.

Extract 3

MS: Halo, assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Malam kak, mau nanya nih,,, bagaimana kesiapan kakak untuk mengikuti kegiatan kerelawanan TIMIP Hamada??? Mau ikut andil atau bagaimana???” (disertakan dengan emotikon senyum lebar)

“Hello, Peace be upon you, Good evening, Older Sister. I want to ask, how is your readiness to join the voluntary program of MIMIP Hamada ?[a kind of social organization] do you want to join or not (big smiley emoticon)

(no answer)

The next day

MS: Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Halo kak, mohon maaf yah, sebaiknya kakak aktif memberikan masukan di grup agar tempo dan jalinan emosionalnya bisa terhubung. Kalau sekedar silent reader, insya allah saya akan bersikap sedikit tegas. (disertakan dengan emotikon senyum lebar)

“Peace be upon you. Hello, Older Sister, I am really sorry. I suggest you to actively give suggestion in the group so the emotional relation can be connected. If you just become a silent reader, I will be strict”

In the above chat, face threatening acts were potentially done by MS to MR. it can be seen that MR never took a part in the conversation in the group. MR just became a silent reader and therefore all of the members in the group including MS did not know whether MR wanted to participate or not. To begin the conversation, MS greeted by saying “*Halo*” (Hello), followed by Islamic greeting, “*Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh*” (peace be upon you). To be more polite, MS also used another kind of greeting by saying “*Malam, Kak*” (Good evening, Older Sister). This greeting was more softened by applying address term “*Kak*” (Older Sister) in order to respect the seniority of MR. All of these expressions softened the direct question of MS, “*bagaimana kesiapan kakak untuk mengikuti kegiatan kerelawanan TIMIP Hamada??? Mau ikut andil atau bagaimana???*” (How is your readiness to join the voluntary program of MIMIP Hamada? do you want to join or not). The smiley emoticon was expressed. However, MR did not respond. In the following day, MS messaged MR again. After the greetings, MS apologized and gave strict warning to MR by saying “*sebaiknya kakak aktif memberikan masukan di grup agar tempo dan jalinan emosionalnya bisa terhubung. Kalau sekedar silent reader, insya allah saya akan bersikap sedikit tegas*” (I suggest you to actively give suggestion in the group so the emotional relation can be connected. If you just become a silent reader, I will be strict). Here it can be seen that there are some strategies applied

by the speakers in the chat to be polite such as greetings, intimate address terms, and apologies. The smiley emoticon was also helpful in reducing the impolite situation in the chat.

Extract 4

*MS: Afwan, itu tugas 2 chapter sj toh kak. Baru sy kerja ini malam/
(Pardon me, the Discourse is only 2 chapters [[to work out]]. I'm just working it out tonight)*

*MR: Tugas apa lagi ?
(What assignment is it again?)*

*MS: itu tugas final kayaknya kak.
(It is final assingment, maybe.kak)*

*MR: Ouwhhh hehhhe iyyek. Intinya review literature.
(Oh hehe Yes. The point is just review literature).*

In the extract above, MS asked a confirmation to MR about the next assignement they must do in their class. He started by saying an islamic apology “Afwan” (I am sorry) since he just started to do it in the night before the class. Getting the question in the chat, MR responded by asking a question too “Tugas apa lagi” (What assignment is it again?). This question was expressed by MR since they have already got too much assignment in that class. MS realized the annoyed situation seen from MR’s answer and tried to calm down by saying, “*itu tugas final kayaknya, Kak* (It is final assignment, maybe, Older Brother). MR confirmed by saying “*Oh Iyek...*” (Oh yes) while laughing. The word “*Iyek*” (Yes) is a very polite expression in Bugis culture. In this extract, the chat between MS and MR created a polite situation using apologies, address terms, and a little joke to minimize the strict situation due to the assignment they must submit to the class.

Extract 5

*MS: dimana ki? Bemana m tugas tefl ta
“where are we [you]? How is you TEFL assignment?”*

MR: *tugas kelpok? sedikit mami, ada m sy buat stengah.. jdi p nant ku kirimkn ki nh
qt mo print i ka ada j print ta*

*“Group assignment? Almost finish. I have already done a part of it. So later I will
send it or do you want me to print it for you?”*

MS: *ok.ok*

“Okey, Okey”

In the above extract, MS asked a question to MR about their assignment in the class. That question actually asked about the readiness of MR to finish the assignment that had been assigned to him. MR responded well that he had finished almost and indeed he offered to send it to him or to print it for him. In this extract, it can be seen that MS applied polite ways in asking his question “*dimana ki? Bimana m tugas tefl ta* (where are you? How is you TEFL assignment?). The use of “*ki*” (we inclusive) in “*dimanaki*” (Where are we [you]?) and the use of “*ta*” (our) in “*Tefl ta*” (our Tefl [your Tefl]) are indicators of polite expressions. The use of “*ki*” (we inclusive) and “*ta*” (we possessive inclusive) is a polite pronoun used by Bugis-Makassar people to address people. Instead of saying “*ko*” (you) and “*mu*” (your) which are less polite, MS address a question using those polite pronouns which made his questions more polite.

Requesting

Extract 6

MS: *Asslm [Assalamualaikum]*

“peace be upon you”

MR: *Walaikumsalam, Ma’am*

“Peace be upon you too”

MS: *Bisa minta tolong di fotokan atau di videokan Zaky? Terima kasih sebelumnya.*

“can I ask for help to take pictures or videos for Zaky? Thanks in advance”

MS: *Iye Ma’am*

“yes, Ma’am”

In the conversation above, MS requested to MR by saying “*Bisa minta tolong di fotokan atau di videokan Zaky?*” (can I ask for help to take pictures or videos for Zaky?). In order to reduce the threat due to that request, MS used greeting in the beginning. After MR replied, MS stated that request and to be polite again, MS expressed thanks by saying, “*Terima kasih sebelumnya*” (thanks in advance}. It can be seen here that greeting and thanks were applied to create the good atmosphere of chats especially when doing requests to the message receivers.

Extract 7

MS: Assalamualaikum. Maaf, Kak mengganggu. Untuk kelancaran baksos kita bersama, kami panitia agar segera melunasi pemesanan baju/totebag/tumbler. Mohon konfirmasi jika sudah pembayaran baju, Kak.” Tabe, ini noreknya, Kak. “Peace be upon you. I am sorry, Older Sister, [I] disturbed [you]. To run the activity together, we from the committee [asked you] to immediately pay the order of clothes, bags, tumblers. Please confirm if [you] have already paid, Older Sister. Excuse me, this is the account name”

MR: [mentioning the name and the account]

MS: Terima Kasih, Kak (smiley emoticon)

“Thank You, Older Sister (smiley emoticon)

In the extract above, MS wanted to ask MR to pay for the stuff had been taken by MR. This request was very threatening since MR owed to MS. However, in the chat, MS applied some strategies to be polite. First she greeted and apologized. Also she used intimate address term “*Kak*” (Older Sister), showing her respect to the interlocutor. She also used the word “*Mohon*” (please) to minimize the request. At the end, before giving the account number to be paid, she used the apologetic term of “*Tabe*” (Excuse me) which is derived from Bugis-Makassar language. After getting the response from MR, she ended by saying “*Terima Kasih, Kak*” (Thank you, Older Sister), followed by smiley emoticon. It can be seen here that the utterances of MS show a positive face from the speaker/sender of the message (young member) to the hearer/receiver (older member) with the use of

polite expressions. The threat due to the request could be minimized by those kinds of polite expressions.

Extract 8

MS: moka lg mintol. Bisako edit fotokah kasi latar merah i

“I want to ask for help. Can you edit the photos by giving red background?”

MR: hehe (laughing)

MS: tpi buka dlu app email mu yg tdi.. kasih masuk it tdi email sma password.a supya lngsung konek i. Merepotkan mika ini

But open first your email. Use that email and the password so that it can connect.

I made you busy then

In this conversation, MS requested MR to do something. Actually it was a hard job since it needed email application. In order to soften his request, he said, “moka lg mintol” which means “*minta tolong*” (I want to ask for help). Then he said, “bisako edit fotokh kasi latar merah i” (Can you edit the photos by giving red background?). This is a kind of direct request of MS to MR responded by MR by laughing. This extract shows the use of direct request in the chat. In order to be polite, at the end, he said “merepotkan mika ini” (I made you busy then). This last expression actually showed his reluctance to ask for help, which actually minimize the potential threat of the request. However, the chats in WA made them free to do the request, accompanied by the use of “*minta tolong*” (I want to ask for help) and the last expression of “*merepotkan mika ini*” (I made you busy then), which was actually a small talk of MS in order to soften his difficult request.

Extract 9

MS: Belum selesai tugasmu kh?

“have you finished your assignment?”

MR: Belum..hahah

“Not yet, hahah (laughing)”

MS: Sudahko?Belum..kerja mi cepat kirimkanka hee

“have you? Not Yet. Do it quickly and send it to me hehe”

MR: *edd*

“Ouch”

In this extract, both speakers are the same age. Because of that, MS asked directly to MR to finish the assignment and send it to MS as soon as possible. Here it can be seen that due to the same age of speakers, direct requests were acceptable in the chat. MS said, *“kerja mi cepat kirimkanka”* (Do it quickly and send it to me). However, to soften that direct request, MS said by laughing *“hehe”*. MR responded by saying *“Edd”* (Ouch). It was a kind of informal expression in Bugis-Makassar context, showing the familiarity of the speakers. Compare with the following extract when the speaker did urgent request to all of the members of the WA group.

Extract 10

MS: *piuuu (sending a file of Microsoft office to be translated).*

bntuin translate ganteng

Ical...

“Can you help translate, handsome man”

Ical...(repeating the message)

MR: *bru kuliat bh.. msih butuh ki kh?*

“I have just seen it. Do you still want it?”

MS: *iyeee cal masih. klo nda sibuk ki*

“Yes, Ical, [I} still need it. If you are not busy”

In the above extract, MS applied request in rather polite way by saying *“bntuin translate ganteng”* (Can you help translate, handsome man). The word *“bantuin”* (please help) means asking for help which is a more polite request. In addition, he used a term *“ganteng”* (handsome man) as a way to address Ical, MS’s friend who was asked to translate the Microsoft word file to be translated. MR tried to respond friendly by saying *“bru kuliat bh.. msih butuh ki kh? (I have just seen it. Do you still want it?)*. MS confirmed the request and softened his request by saying *“iyeee cal masih. klo nda sibuk ki”* (Yes,

Ical, [I] still need it. If you are not busy). When MS said, “*klo nda sibuk ki*” (if you are not busy), MS shows that MS was still trying to negotiate the situation for his request. He showed that although his request was urgent indeed, he still tried to use a small talk which invited humor to minimize the potential threat of his direct and urgent request to MR.

Refusals

Extract 11

MS: *dimana?*

“Where are you?”

MR: *di rumahnya temanku*

“In my frind’s home”

MS: *antar ke kampus dulue..*

“take me to the campus first”

MR: *aihh, napake temanku motorku belah*

“Aish, my motorcycle was used by other friend of mine”

MS: *ok lah*

“okey then”

In the extract above, MS applied direct strategy in the request. He first asked directly “*dimana?*” (Where are you?). Later he said, “*antar ke kampus dulue..*” (take me to the campus first), which is a kind of direct request to MR. The same age of MS and age made this request acceptable. Conversely, MR in responding to the request tried to minimize his impoliteness in refusing the request of MS by saying the reasons clearly. He said, “*aihh, napake temanku motorku belah*” (Aish, my motorcycle was used by other friend of mine). In this way, he was trying to be polite in refusing the requests.

Extract 12

MS: *dimanako?*

“Where are you?”

MR: *d samata ja..*

- "I am just in Samata"*
- MS: *kesniko dulu d hertasning ee*
"come here first to Hertasning"
- MR: *meletus ban motorku belah..*
"I have a flat tyre"
- MS: *awee, buangmi motormu baru naik ojekmo.. haha. lokkano ha mai gatti*
"Oh my God. Just throw your motorcycle away, just use Ojek (rented motorcycle).
Hahaha come here quickly"
- MR: *hahah tajenna..*
"hahah just wait"

In the above extract, MS asked directly to MR by using a very direct question: "dimanako?" (where are you?). he also asked MR to come quickly by saying "kesniko dulu d hertasning ee" (come here first to Hertasning). When MR refused the request by saying the reasons, MS said, "awee, buangmi motormu baru naik ojekmo.. haha. lokkano ha mai gatti" (Oh my God. Just throw your motorcycle away, just use Ojek (rented motorcycle). Hahaha come here quickly). This is a kind of joke in responding to the refused requests from MR. later, MR said, "hahah tajenna.." (hahah just wait) showing his agreement to come quickly by using a rented motorcycle. In this extract, it can be seen that agreement and negotiation of the requests could be done directly and used a joke as a small talk to minimize the face threatening act between the speakers.

Extract 13

- MS: *Assalamualaikum warahmatullah*
"Peace be upon you"
- MR: *Waalikumussalam Maaf. Kayaknya belum bisaka ke kampus ini hari karena, ada rapatku*
"peace be upon to you too. I am sorry. I could not go to campus today, because I have a meeting"
- MS: *Iya pade. Nanti kutanya Kak Ical*
"Okay then, I will tell to Older Brother Ical later"

MR: *Iyee minta maaf sekalika ini.*

"Yes, I am really sorry"

In the conversation above, MS had a chat to MS. He was actually confirming whether MR wanted to come to the meeting or not. When MS chatted MR by saying "*Assalamualaikum warahmatullah*" (Peace be upon you), MR already knew that MS asked for that confirmation. MR directly clarified that he could not make the meeting by saying, "*Walaikumussalam Maaf. Kayaknya belum bisaka ke kampus ini hari karena, ada rapatku*" (peace be upon to you too. I am sorry. I could not go to campus today, because I have a meeting). In this way, MR tried to be polite in his refusal to the request. He responded the greeting and apologized. MS then responded by saying "*Iya pade. Nanti kutanya Kak Ical*" (Okay then, I will tell to Older Brother Ical later). This response was also used to minimize the impolite expression which might be caused by the refusal of the request. At the end, MR responded by saying "*Iyee minta maaf sekalika ini*" (Yes, I am really sorry). This last expression showed being very regret which could soften the bad effect of his refusal to the request. Therefore, it can be seen that the speaker in this chat both speakers tried to apply polite expressions in their chat.

Extract 14

MS: *Assalamualaikum, Miss, Maaf belum bisa bergabung*

"Peace be upon you, Miss. I am sorry I cannot join you [all]"

MR: *Wass...ok sir*

"Peace be upon you too, Okay Sir"

MS: *Karena masih ikut rapat. Kebetulan aku di minta mewakili my father untuk mengikuti rapat*

"Because [I] still have a meeting. I was asked to represent my father to join [another] meeting"

MR: *Siap, goodluck!.*

"Okey, Good luck"

MS: *okey sip.*

"Okay, allright"

In the above extract, MS messaged MR to confirm again that he could not come to join them together. He said, “*Assalamualaikum, Miss, Maaf belum bisa bergabung*” (Peace be upon you, Miss. I am sorry I cannot join you [all]). In this situation, MS could be very impolite since he did not fulfill their agreement for the meeting that had been finalized before. In order to minimize his impoliteness, he applied greeting and apologized. After getting the response from MR by saying “*Wass...ok sir*” (Peace be upon you too, Okay Sir), MS still tried to negotiate the agreement by explaining the reason he could not come by saying, “*Karena masih ikut rapat. Kebetulan aku di minta mewakili my father untuk mengikuti rapat*” (Because [I] still have a meeting. I was asked to represent my father to join [another] meeting). In this case, it can be seen that MS tried to seek for agreement in his chat. Conversely, MR tried to receive the reason stated by MS. It can be seen that in this chat, seeking agreement is normally used in the chat in order to minimize the threat due to the potentially impolite action such as in disobeying the agreed promise.

Extract 15

MS: Maaf ka' nah sist, tdk bisa ka' temani dirimu
“I am sorry, Sister, I could not accompany you”

MR: Oke beb nda apa apa
“Okey, Beb, no worries”

This conversation above is a kind of give (or ask for) reason strategy of positive politeness. MS said, “*Maaf ka nah sist tdk bisa ka temani dirimu*” (“I am sorry, Sister, I could not accompany you). MS could not accompany MR because there was something he wanted to do although she did not explain in detail in the chat. In the conversation there was a word “*Maaf*” (I am sorry) expressed by MS and MR responded calmly by saying “*Oke beb nda apa apa*” (Okey, Baby, no worries). The use of “*Okey*” and “*Beb*” (Baby) minimized the situation. The expression “*no worries*” at the end also ended the conversation with polite and intimate situation. Here it can be seen that both speakers were trying to be polite in their chat.

Discussion

All of the fifteen extracts above demonstrate the application of politeness strategies in the ways the students communicate in the WhatsApp chats. Some of those strategies were used in asking questions, requesting, and refusing.

Strategies of politeness can be seen in the ways the students asked questions (extract 1-5). Questioning is one of the speech acts that potentially cause face threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, questioners need to consider the effects of questions on the addressee; otherwise, they may lead to face threatening acts. For that reason, asking and answering questions should be performed indirectly. In extract 1-5, the students performed some strategies to be polite in asking questions by accompanying the questions with greeting, apologizing, thanking, address terms, and some terms from their own regional language. Those strategies were used each other to support their politeness expressions in order to create good conversations.

The same case can be seen in requesting, in which the students applied some strategies to be polite (extract 6-10). In making a request, the requestee/ addressee face is threatened as Brown and Levinson (1987) claims that by making a request, the speaker may threaten the hearer' negative face by intending to impede the hearers' freedom of action. This definition clearly shows that request is a directive utterance in which expressed by the speaker in order to the hearer fulfill the speaker' desire or goals and also the speaker want to change the behavior of the hearer during the interaction. In the extracts of their WhatsApp chats (extract 6-10), the students applied some strategies to be polite in their requests by greeting, apologizing, thanking, applying address terms, and using some terms from their own regional language. In addition, they applied small talk and humor in order to minimize the potential threats of the requests.

The same strategies for politeness can also be seen in the ways the students applied refusals. Seen in extract 11-15 above, the students applied some strategies to refuse such as greeting, apologizing, thanking, applying address terms, and using some terms from their own regional language. To some extent, applying small talk and humor are effective in reducing the threat caused by refusals. Previous studies in terms of refusal strategies had also been conducted by some scholars and found the significant functions of the acts of refusings in communication. Al-Eryani (2007, p. 21) had confirmed that the speech act

of refusal is a face-threatening act to the listener/ requester/ inviter, because it contradicts his or her expectations, and is often realized through indirect strategies. Thus, it requires a high level of pragmatic competence to avoid offending one's interlocutors. In the same opinion, Know (2004) states that refusals can be tricky speech acts to perform linguistically and psychologically since the possibility of offending the interlocutor is inherent in the act itself. The recent study of refusal strategies by Al-Ghamdi and Alrefae (2020) among Yemenis and Americans found the differences in terms of the ways Yemenis and Americans applied refusal strategies. The social status of persons has greatly influenced the use and selection of refusal strategies among Yemenis and Americans. In addition, there is also an influence of cross cultural differences. All of these studies show that the act of refusal in communication is important as the strategies to create good flow of communication. Otherwise, it may cause face threatening acts and therefore may cause impoliteness in the interactions.

From all of the above extracts, it can be seen that students managed their respects in their WhatsApp chats through some polite expressions. The study shows that in those activities, students applied greetings, thanks, apologies, some identity markers such as the use of address terms and some terms from their own regional language, humors, and small talk as their polite rituals of interaction. Those strategies were used each other to support their politeness expressions in order to create good conversations such as in asking questions, requesting, and refusing.

Several studies had also confirmed the crucial functions of greetings as forms of speech acts in communication, especially in creating politeness. This is because a greeting is considered to be one of the positive politeness devices which express solidarity, intimacy, and friendliness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Bonvillain (1993, p. 104) also states that "greetings function to begin communicative interactions or to acknowledge the presence of others". Recent studies also supported the ideas of greeting as politeness strategies. Tan, Teoh, & Tan, (2016), for example, found the important functions of greetings, such as to acknowledge the interlocutors. In addition, studies proved that greetings are a feature of good social manner (Soo, David, Kia, & Pei, 2011; Hei, David, & Kia, 2013).

In terms of thanking expressions, this study shows the important function of thanking expression as polite strategies in the WhatsApp chats. Leech (1983, p. 106) views thanks as “a convivial function rather than competitive, being performed in the interests of someone other than the speaker and therefore intrinsically polite”. Expressing thanks/gratitude is thus considered a polite or courteous device which avoids face threatening acts. In relation to Brown and Levinson theory (1987), expressing thanks can be categorized as an effort to intensify interest to hearers and therefore created positive politeness. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) idea also states that expressing thanks/gratitude is considered a polite or courteous device which avoids face threatening acts and therefore it can also be used to express solidarity above the power. Studies recently had proved the function of thanking expression as a polite expression to start and begin the chats (Özdemir & Rezvani, 2010; Yusefi, Gowhary, Azizifar, & Esmaceli, 2015; Tan, Teoh, & Tan, 2016).

This study also found that apologizing becomes one strategy to soften the conversation in the students’ WhatsApp. According to Bonvillain, an apology’s purpose is “to maintain or re-establish rapport between interlocutors” (1993, p. 107). According to Leech (1983, pp. 104-105), apologizing is “a convivial speech act” because to apologize will “coincide with the social goal of maintaining harmony between speaker and hearer”. With reference to Brown and Levinson’s idea (1987), apologies are face-threatening acts because performing an apology requires the speaker to admit to having done wrong, thus undermining his/her face. However, in this study, apologizing become a polite ritual among the students to minimize the acts of asking questions, requesting, and refusing. Studies by Al-Sobh (2013), Banikalef, Maros, Aladdin, & Al-Natour (2015), and Jazeri, Sukarsono, and Susanto (2020) also supported this idea of using apologies as politeness strategies. Jazeri, Sukarsono, and Susanto (2020), the recent study, for example, found that among Thai learners, apology functions as the way to (1) heal humiliations, (2) free the mind from deep-seated guilt, (3) remove the desire for vengeance, and (4) restore broken relationships. This shows that apology can minimize the conflict, and therefore can maintain the good relation among the learners, which creates polite interactions among the learners.

Another important finding in this study is the use of some identity markers such as the use of identity markers and some terms from the students' regional language. The use of address terms as a softening mechanism such as the use of "*kak*" (older brother/sister) by the students show their politeness to the different interlocutors during the presentation. In addition, the use of some terms from the students' regional language to communicate, such as *tabe'*, *di'*, *mi*. is also a good strategy for students to communicate in the WhatsApp chats. The terms from the students' regional language show the functions of identity markers as a way to show the students' politeness in the WhatsApp chats. With reference to Brown and Levinson (1987), these address terms were known as "in-group identity markers" which aim to minimize the distance between speaker and hearer and to reduce the hearer's disappointment by expressing friendliness. In his study in Javanese society, Susanto (2104) also found that address term is used "to designate the person they are talking to or to show the possession of formal and informal manners" (p. 140).

The extracts above also show the use of humor as polite strategies to minimize the potential face threatening acts, especially when they need to refuse the requests. Brown and Levinson (1987) had noticed the function of humor as the positive politeness which creates polite interaction. A study by Omar and Jan (2013) proved that humor primarily acts as a channel of solidarity when it functions through friendly teasing and boundary marking, highlighting similarities or shared knowledge and disclosing of personal stories to the team members. A study by Holmes (2007) in Maori leadership proved that humor provides leaders with a valuable communicative resource for reconciling the competing transactional and relational demands which face them and also provides a flexible indirect strategy for constructing leadership in ways that avoid conflict.

Small talk is also a positive politeness strategy which shows the speaker's interest or friendship toward the hearer by talking about unrelated topics for some time (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 122). Tannen (1991) also asserted that small talk is crucial in maintaining social relationships. A study by Pullin (2010) supported the idea of using small talk as politeness strategies since small talk can be used to develop solidarity, despite linguistic and cultural differences, and thus increase the likelihood of avoiding or successfully overcoming communication problems.

Conclusion

This study concludes that English students had some strategies to manage their respect in their conversation in social media, especially in their WhatsApp chats. This can be seen in the use of some strategies to be polite in the way they were asking questions, requesting, and refusing. The forms of greetings, thanks, apologies, some identity markers (e.g. the use of address terms and some terms from the students' regional language), humor and small talk were applied as strategies to manage the respect among them in their conversations. This study also proved that the idea of "face-saving view" of Brown and Levinson (1987) was relevant to be practiced in the context of communication in social media, especially in WhatsApp chats among the English students. Several strategies of politeness of Brown and Levinson (1987) were applied by the English students in their WhatsApp chats both positive politeness and negative politeness.

Findings from this study have some pedagogical implications. This study has provided significant ideas of how to manage the conversation among the students in their daily life, especially in social media as online communication. The online communication which is now flourishing should give benefits to those people who are using it, especially the students who need to maintain good communication among themselves. Therefore, findings from this study had contributed significantly to the literature of communication strategies which is important to be possessed by students in today's society. This study shows that although English students were subject to high technology of online communication, some strategies to show respect are still applied for the sake of good interaction and mutual understanding. Teachers can also make use of the findings of this study as input to manage the use of technology in the process of learning and teaching in the class, especially in the way they use social media in communication both in the class and outside the class. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the literature of politeness research in social media communication in particular and in Asian context, in general. Since this study was conducted in a certain and restricted context of communicative situation (by exploring WhatsApp chats), further studies need to be conducted in wider contexts of communication. Researchers need to make use of these findings as reference for more exploration in politeness studies in different

communicative situations, especially in terms of the use of other forms of social media as online communication.

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