

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF LANGUAGE POLITENESS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of social media in forming language politeness in elementary school students. The type of research used is a qualitative approach with data sources from students, teachers, and parents. The location of the research was carried out at SDN Semampirejo, Lamongan Regency. Data collection techniques use observation, interviews, and documentation. This model emphasizes that data analysis in qualitative research takes place in a cycle and consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. The results of the study show that social media has a complex influence on students' language politeness. Students tend to maintain language politeness when communicating with teachers and parents, but in interaction with peers, the use of language is more relaxed and follows digital trends. Schools have tried to teach language norms and ethics, but the main challenge is how to shape those habits in student interactions on social media. Environmental factors, including the roles of teachers, parents, and peers, have a major influence on students' communication patterns. In addition, indications of negative behavior, such as profanity and sarcasm in online communication, were found, indicating the importance of further supervision. This study concludes that social media has a dual role in the formation of language politeness. Therefore, collaboration is needed between schools, families, and the surrounding environment to instill the values of politeness in students' digital communication.

Keywords

Elementary school students, Language politeness, and Social media.



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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, including education. Social media is defined as an internet-based digital platform that allows users to interact, share information, and form social networks through various communication formats, such as text, images, video, and sound (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Along with the development of technology, social media is not only used as a means of entertainment but also as a medium of communication and learning for various age groups, including elementary school students (Hanika et al., 2020; Jeong & Kim, 2021). Social media such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are the main platforms used by students to interact, share information, and shape their social identity (Androutsopoulos, 2015). In Indonesia, data shows that the use of social media among children and adolescents has increased significantly, both for academic and non-academic purposes (Woran et al., 2021). This phenomenon has a complex impact, especially in the aspect of language politeness.

The results of preliminary observations at SDN Semampirejo, Lamongan Regency, show that students' language politeness in daily communication still varies. Interactions between students and teachers generally show a good level of politeness, where students use polite forms of greeting and verbal expressions that reflect respect for the teacher. However, in communication between students, there are some indications of a decline in language politeness, especially in interactions in non-formal environments such as during breaks or outside the classroom. The influence of social media seems to play a role in changing students' communication patterns. Some students tend to imitate the language styles that often appear on social media platforms, such as the use of abbreviations and informal expressions that are sometimes not in accordance with the norms of politeness in the local culture. A study by Umami et al (2024) found that exposure to social media content can change children's communication patterns, especially in the use of diction and sentence structures that are more concise and pay less attention to good and correct language rules. This finding is reinforced by Fuad Hasyim's research (2025), which shows that children who are often involved in online communication have a tendency to adopt informal language styles that sometimes pay less attention to politeness norms. In addition, in classroom interactions, there is a tendency for students to use direct speech more often without paying attention to the level of language politeness, especially in responding to instructions or questions from peers. This is in line with Jadidah et al's research (2023), which states that elementary school students today tend to experience changes in language use due to intense interaction with social media, where politeness

norms are not always a top priority in online conversations. From the results of this observation, it can be concluded that social media affects changes in communication patterns and language politeness of students at SDN Semampirejo. Therefore, there needs to be a learning strategy that emphasizes digital literacy and character education to ensure that the use of social media does not shift the values of politeness in daily communication.

Language politeness is not only limited to the use of polite words but also includes awareness of adjusting language to the prevailing social context and cultural norms. Leech (2014) argues that language politeness includes principles such as tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Furthermore, Leech explains that the principle of politeness in language serves to minimize impoliteness and maximize harmony in communication. Watts (2005) introduced the concept of face-saving, which is an individual's effort to maintain one's own and others' self-esteem in language interaction. A theory of politeness that focuses on strategies to maintain the positive and negative faces of interlocutors in social interactions (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Pramujiono et al., 2020). Language politeness can be known through various indicators that reflect compliance with social and cultural norms in communication. In the context of primary education, indicators of language politeness include the use of polite expressions such as "please" and "thank you", the avoidance of potentially offensive utterances, and the ability to convey criticism in a non-derogatory manner (Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Olifiya & Utami, 2024).

Language politeness has a very important role in the social and academic development of elementary school students. At this stage, children are in a period of character building, including aspects of communication and social interaction. The use of polite language reflects the cultural and social values adopted by a society, so the habituation of polite language from an early age can help students build harmonious relationships with peers, teachers, and the surrounding environment (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). In addition, research by Setiawaty (2021) shows that students who have good language politeness tend to be more accepted in the social environment and have more effective communication skills.

The development of digital technology has changed the way individuals communicate, including elementary school students, who are increasingly familiar with social media. However, the use of social media also influences language politeness, both in positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, social media allows students to learn to communicate more widely and understand the diversity of language cultures. A study conducted by Tagliamonte (2016) showed that online

interactions can improve students' language skills through exposure to different varieties of language used by speakers from different backgrounds. However, on the other hand, digital communication is often more spontaneous and brief and lacks social control, which can lead to reduced politeness in language (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016). For example, the use of harsh words, sarcasm, or mockery in comments and short messages often occurs due to students' lack of awareness of the impact of their communication on others (Setiawaty, 2021). In addition, the anonymity feature on some social media platforms can also make it easier for students to express their opinions without considering politeness norms (Page et al., 2022). Thus, it is important to understand how social media shapes students' communication patterns and find the right strategies for instilling language politeness in this digital era.

Several studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between social media and language politeness, showing that digital communication patterns can influence the way individuals use language in social interactions. For example, research revealed that social media creates new communication spaces that often blur the lines between politeness and impoliteness (Krikela, 2022). The study highlights how factors such as anonymity, the openness of the platform, and the dynamics of online interactions can lead to shifting norms of politeness in language. In addition, research from Darwin & Norton (2017) shows that social media can be an effective educational tool in instilling language politeness if its use is well-directed through strengthening digital literacy (Salsabila et al., 2024). This is in line with the findings of Prayudha et al. (2023), who observed that students who received coaching on communication ethics on social media showed a higher level of language politeness than students who did not receive similar coaching. Meanwhile, research by Widiananda (2022) identified that digital forms of communication, such as comments and instant messaging, are often more expressive and tend to ignore the norms of politeness commonly found in face-to-face communication. With the increasing use of social media by elementary school students, there needs to be further studies on how this digital platform plays a role in shaping language politeness.

The research to be conducted at SDN Semampirejo, Lamongan Regency, has major differences compared to previous studies, especially in terms of population focus and analytical approach. While previous studies have highlighted the impact of social media in general on various age groups, this study is more specific in observing how social media shapes the language politeness patterns of elementary school students in their daily interactions. In addition, this study not only examines the influence of social media in online communication, but also how its impact is reflected

in students' oral communication in the school environment. The approach used is also more empirical through direct observation, so that it can provide a more concrete picture of changes in student communication patterns in the context of basic education. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to understanding the role of social media in the formation of children's language politeness from an early age, as well as designing effective strategies for developing digital literacy oriented towards politeness values in language. Based on the above background, this study aims to describe the role of social media in shaping the language politeness of elementary school students.

METHOD

This type of research uses a qualitative approach, which is a research approach that focuses on an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, culture, or human behavior in a particular context (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research was conducted at SDN Semampirejo, Lamongan Regency, with the object of research of grade V students. The data sources collected consist of primary (the results of interviews with students, teachers, and parents) and secondary data form of academic publications, research reports, books, or articles in scientific journals (Bowen, 2009). Data collection techniques used to reveal the role of social media in the formation of language politeness of elementary school students include observation, interview, and documentation. In this study, observations were made of students' interactions in the use of social media, both in the context of communication with peers as well as with teachers and parents, with the instrument of participatory observation sheets, where researchers participated in the students' digital community. In this study, interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and parents to understand their perceptions of language politeness on social media with a semi-structured interview sheet instrument that there are still had guiding questions, but gave participants room to express their experiences and views freely. In this study, the documents reviewed were screenshots of student conversations on social media and relevant research photographs to assist in verifying data from other techniques and strengthening the credibility of the research results.

The data analysis technique used in this research is the interactive analysis model by Miles & Huberman (1994). This model emphasizes that data analysis in qualitative research cyclically takes place and consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. In this study, data reduction was carried out by sorting out relevant information related to students' language politeness in social media. Unrelated or repetitive data

were eliminated, while data that had analytical value were organized into appropriate thematic categories. This process helps researchers to focus more on understanding students' communication patterns on social media. In this study, the presentation of data is in the form of direct quotes from interviews, summaries of observation results, or recordings of student conversations on social media that reflect the level of language politeness. With good data presentation, researchers can see students' communication patterns that shape language politeness on social media. In this study, conclusions were drawn based on students' communication patterns on social media. To ensure the validity of the findings, researchers used data triangulation techniques, discussions with peers, and confirmation from research informants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The following researchers present the results of observations, which include several aspects, including student interaction patterns in social media, language politeness in social media, language norms and ethics applied by students, the influence of the environment in the formation of language politeness, and indications of negative behavior in language.

Table 1. Observation Result

No	Aspect	Findings
1.	Student interaction patterns in social media	The majority of students actively use social media, especially WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram, to communicate with peers, share schoolwork information, and follow entertainment trends. However, the communication patterns are more in the form of short conversations with the use of abbreviations or informal language that tends not to pay attention to standard language rules, as well as the use of emojis or stickers as a substitute for words in responding to messages.
2.	Language politeness in social media	Some students still apply polite language, especially when interacting with teachers or elders. However, in conversations with peers, many students tend to use casual language and pay less attention to good manners and communication, sometimes accompanied by slang terms and Prokem language.
3.	Language norms and ethics applied by students	In communication with teachers or parents, students tend to maintain politeness, for example by using the word "Pak/Bu" in greeting. However, in interactions with peers, there is a tendency to use freer language, including jokes that sometimes lead to ridicule.
4.	The influence of the environment on the formation of language politeness	Students who receive stricter supervision from their parents tend to be more careful in their language online. Teachers also have a role in providing examples of good language use, especially in the classroom group. However, peer pressure often

5. Indications of negative behavior in language	influences the way students speak, even if it is less polite. Some students use words that contain elements of sarcasm or ridicule in communicating with peers. There are cases where students lack filtering information before sharing it, which can lead to misunderstandings or even minor conflicts within the group. There is a tendency for some students to mimic language styles from content on social media that do not always conform to the norms of politeness.
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Overall, the observation results show that students have a diverse understanding of language politeness on social media. The interaction patterns they build are strongly influenced by the environment, peer habits, and control from teachers and parents. Although there are still positive aspects in language politeness, there are also indications of language use that is not in accordance with the norms of good communication ethics. Therefore, more intensive educational efforts are needed to increase students' awareness of using polite language in the digital world (Pratikno, 2023).

The following researchers present the results of interviews with students, teachers, and parents. Interviews from the three sources emphasized the following aspects, namely patterns of social media use by students, students' understanding of language politeness in social media, the influence of social media on students' language patterns, the role of teachers and schools in guiding language politeness, the role of parents in supervising the use of social media, indications of negative behavior in language on social media.

Table 2. Interview Results

No	Aspect	Sources		
		Students	Teacher	Parents
1.	Patterns of social media use by students	The majority of students have access to social media, especially WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram. Students use social media to communicate with peers, play online games, and seek information and entertainment.	Teachers say many students use social media for academic purposes, such as sharing assignments or finding references. However, there are concerns that uncontrolled use of social media can disrupt learning, concentration, and affect students' language habits.	Some parents apply strict rules, such as limiting usage time and monitoring their children's online activities. However, most parents admit to finding it difficult to fully control due to busy schedules or limited understanding of technology.
2.	Students' understanding of language politeness in social media	Most students understand using polite language when talking to teachers or	Teachers stated that students' understanding of language politeness	Some parents find it difficult to provide consistent understanding

	elders on social media. However, in communication with peers, students tend to be more casual and use informal language, slang, and abbreviations.	is quite good in formal situations, but is often less applied in daily communication on social media.	because children learn more from their social environment.
3. The influence of social media on students' language patterns	Social media greatly affects the way students speak and write. Many students are used to using slang or popular terms from social media trends in their daily communication.	Teachers say social media is changing the way students write and speak. Teachers often find the use of inappropriate abbreviations in academic assignments, as well as the use of non-standard words in formal communication.	Parents revealed that they often hear their children speaking in a style influenced by social media trends.
4. The role of teachers and schools in guiding language politeness	Some students admitted that teachers often remind them of the importance of using polite language, especially in class groups on WhatsApp or other social media used for learning.	The teachers realized that some schools have included communication ethics in their lessons, but the application is still limited. The teachers hope that there is a program that can help students better understand language ethics in the digital world.	Parents hope that schools can be more active in providing education about language ethics on social media.
5. The role of parents in supervising the use of social media	Some students stated that their parents often advised them about using good language on social media. Others said that their parents rarely supervise their online activities.	Teachers realized that parents' involvement in monitoring social media use varied. Some parents are very proactive, but others are less concerned or find it difficult due to a lack of understanding of the digital world.	Parents who are more active in supervision tend to apply rules. However, some parents admit to finding it difficult to supervise their children because they are more adept at using technology.
6. Indications of negative behavior in	Some students admitted to seeing or	The teachers mentioned that	Parents who are more active in

language on social media	being involved in conversations that contained negative elements. However, the students stated that they just followed along without realizing the impact.	negative behavior in language on social media is increasingly common, such as cyberbullying and hate speech.	supervising their children if they see signs of disrespectful language use.
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Based on interviews with students, teachers, and parents, it can be concluded that social media has a big role in shaping students' language habits (Amaruddin et al., 2020). Students' understanding of language politeness is quite good, but its application is still influenced by the environment and trends on social media. Teachers and schools have tried to provide guidance, but there is still a need for more effective strategies so that students are more aware of the importance of speaking politely in the digital world. Meanwhile, the role of parents in supervising the use of social media still varies, depending on their level of understanding of technology. Cooperation between schools, families, and digital communities is needed to ensure that social media can be used as a positive means of communication and support the development of students' language politeness.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher will conduct a discussion based on the research objectives, namely, describing the role of social media in shaping the language politeness of elementary school students. The discussion focuses on the aspects presented in each paragraph, which include the pattern of student interaction on social media, language politeness on social media, language norms and ethics applied by students, the influence of the environment in the formation of language politeness, and indications of negative behavior in language.

The results showed that the majority of students use social media as a means of communication and entertainment. According to Rahayu (2019), the development of digital technology has expanded children's access to various social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram. Interactions that occur on social media are often informal, which causes the use of language to be more relaxed and tends to follow developing digital trends. This is in line with the findings of Wijayanti & Dewi (2023), who stated that students' communication patterns in social media tend to be influenced by the language styles that develop in their online communities.

In interactions on social media, students show two main patterns in language: politeness that is maintained when communicating with teachers or parents, and the use of freer language in conversations with peers. According to Leech (2014), Language politeness is influenced by social relationship factors and the context of the conversation. This study supports the theory by finding that students are more careful in communicating with those who have authority than with peers. However, in some cases, students tend to pay less attention to politeness norms when interacting in online forums or discussion groups (Khotijah & Ismail, 2019). This is due to the anonymity and lack of direct control in digital communication, as expressed by Herring (2019), who states that social media can reduce individual awareness of social norms in language.

In interviews with teachers, it was found that schools have tried to provide lessons on language ethics in the digital world. According to Simpen (2017), language norms and ethics include aspects of politeness, adherence to language rules, and respect for the interlocutor. However, the challenge is how to instill these habits in students' daily interactions on social media (Guntara & Putri, 2025). Some students admit that they more often imitate the language used by influencers or viral content, which does not always reflect good politeness (Rostina, 2025).

Environmental factors, whether from schools, families, or peers, have a role in shaping students' language politeness on social media (Belinda & Abidin, 2023). Teachers play a role in providing an understanding of the importance of polite and normative communication, while parents are responsible for supervising and guiding children in using social media wisely (Zai, 2024). A study by Faliyandra (2019) emphasized that the influence of a positive family environment can help children build awareness of good language ethics.

Although most students understand the importance of language politeness, the interview results show indications of negative behavior, such as the use of harsh words, sarcasm, and mockery in online communication. This phenomenon is referred to as "cyber incivility" by Rainie et al. (2017), which states that freedom in social media is often misused to express opinions in an impolite manner. Therefore, more intensive efforts are needed from teachers and parents to instill the values of civility in digital communication (Kholifah et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that social media plays a dual role in the formation of language politeness of elementary school students. On the one hand, social media is a means for students to develop communication skills and interact in various contexts. However, on the other hand, uncontrolled use of social media can cause a shift in the value of politeness in language, such as the use of informal language, harsh words, and a lack of awareness of communication norms and ethics. Environmental factors, whether from schools, families, or peers, have an important role in shaping polite language habits. Teachers and schools play a role in providing education about language ethics in the digital world, while parents have the responsibility to supervise and guide children in using social media wisely. Therefore, synergy between various parties is needed to ensure that social media can be utilized positively in shaping the language politeness of elementary school students. The implication of this research is that schools and parents need to improve digital literacy and supervision of students' use of social media. The school curriculum can include material on digital communication ethics so that students are more aware of the importance of language politeness in cyberspace. In addition, teachers can use social media as an educational tool to instill better language habits. The recommendation for future research is to conduct a more in-depth study related to the effectiveness of the digital literacy program in shaping students' language politeness. The research can also be expanded with a quantitative approach to statistically measure the extent of the influence of social media on students' language behavior.

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