



STRATEGY OF ASKING FORGIVENESS in 4-5 YEAR OLD CHILDREN (CASE STUDY AT ABA KEPUH WETAN KINDERGARTEN YOGYAKARTA)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the strategy of apologizing in children aged 4-5 years. At the age of 4, children have started using complete sentences. At the age of 4 years, pronunciation and grammar improve, this is marked by the child's ability to socialize and find ways to communicate misunderstandings with friends. Research related to language politeness strategies still focuses on the maxims of quantity and quality. Studies on language politeness strategies that focus on how early childhood is able to use various forms of language politeness strategies in various interactions. The purpose of this study is to determine the form of language politeness in early childhood when apologizing. This research method is a qualitative case study. Researchers used observation, recording, and interview techniques. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles & Huberman flow model. Data validity is achieved by credibility test, transferability test, dependability test, and finally objectivity test. The results show that children use three strategies in apologizing, namely (1) direct or what it is without pleasantries (Bald on Record), (2) positive politeness strategies, and (3) negative politeness strategies.

Keywords: *Apologizing, Politeness, Early Children*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The capacity to utilize language effectively is a skill that should be instilled from an early age. Language acquisition plays a significant role in developing the human mind, including as a marker of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) discuss politeness and use the term face, something that must be maintained, upheld, and must always be considered in interaction. Maintaining face is a form of respect for members of speech communities. In real interpersonal communication, one's face is said to always be in a state of threat, necessitating the saving of one's face in the sense that the principle of politeness is needed in speech activities (Rahardi, 2005).

In contrast with the perspective of Brown & Levinson (1987), the deployment of language politeness strategies in children is invariably contingent on social variables, specifically:

(i) the social distance between speakers and listeners (asymmetric relationship), (2) the magnitude of the difference in power or dominance between them (asymmetric relationship), and (3) the relational status of the type of speech act in the culture concerned (meaning, there are speech acts that in culture are considered to be or not to threatening to



face).

Recent research indicates that children taught politeness tend to better adapt to diverse social situations and exhibit lower levels of conflict with peers (Pekdogan & Kanak, 2020; McClelland et al., 2017). Furthermore, early application of politeness has been shown to contribute to positive character development and strengthen effective communication skills (Garner et al., 2018). Wardhana and Noermanzah (2021) describe language politeness strategies in early childhood in multiethnic communication in Bengkulu, indicating that children already demonstrate an awareness of social distance. Additionally, Rusminto and Ariyani (2022) posit that children utilize politeness strategies to prevent offending their interlocutors, to avoid losing face, and to maintain the flow of conversation. Politeness also contributes to balancing interaction and preventing coercion, becoming part of children's negotiation (Chen, 2017; Alakrash and Bustan, 2020; Fauziah, Trisnawati, and Aminudin, 2020). Politeness is a strategy used by a person to consider the wishes and feelings of the interlocutor. Children are capable of producing polite speech forms from an early age (Küntay et al., 2014; Kavaliauskaitė-Vilkinienė, 2019; Almacioğlu, 2020; Al-Abbas, 2023).

The politeness of an apology is an important aspect of human social and emotional development, particularly during the early childhood phase. The ability to apologize not only involves the use of appropriate language but also the understanding of the importance of admitting mistakes and showing empathy for the feelings of others (Waddington et al., 2023). Developing civility in early childhood is key to children's social and emotional development. Furthermore, it fosters harmonious social skills (Hübscher et al., 2019) and facilitates the development of empathy and understanding of others' perspectives (Kunjana et al., 2015; Thiede et al., 2023; Björk-Willén, 2018).

Children utilize apologizing strategies as a means of maintaining social relationships. Apologies have been used to exchange solutions or remedies (Denham et al., 2007). It is not simple to apologize to repair a troubled relationship (Sinclair, 2021). Additionally, children occasionally demonstrate regret and acknowledge their transgressions, yet lack the knowledge of the appropriate manner in which to offer an apology (Amir et al., 2021). Nevertheless, several studies have indicated that children employ various strategies or techniques in apologizing (Chang and Ren, 2020; Setyowati, 2020; Zerey and Sofu, 2021).

This research is based on the theory of Brown & Levinson's (1987) apology politeness strategy, which proposes four politeness strategies. (1) Bald-on-record speech is direct speech in which speakers say something explicitly and directly to speech partners



(Ogiermann, 2009; Setyowati, 2020). (2) Positive politeness is demonstrated by speakers showing a friendly attitude through actions such as appreciating, approving, and familiarity with their speech partners (Ogiermann, 2009; Fauziah et al., 2023; Wiranty and Ramaniar, 2023). (3) Negative politeness is a strategy employed to respect the listener's need to be undisturbed or unburdened. This strategy aims to mitigate the impact of threats on individuals by adopting a polite and respectful demeanor (Ogiermann, 2009; Fauziah et al., 2023; Wiranty and Ramaniar, 2023). In this strategy, speakers utilize tactics to maintain social distance. (4) Bald off-record speech is a strategy of innuendo, whereby listeners are encouraged to interpret the speaker's intentions independently (Ogiermann, 2009).

1.2. Research questions

The question at the core of this research on politeness in children is which forms of politeness strategies are employed by children aged 4-5 years when they are apologizing.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This type of research is qualitative and employs the case study method. This research aims to examine in depth the politeness strategy of apologizing to children aged four to five years old in kindergarten. The research was conducted at ABA Kepuh Wetan Kindergarten in Wirokerten, Banguntapan, Bantul, Yogyakarta. The researcher employed observation, recording, and interview techniques.

2.2. Samples/Participants

The participants of this study were children aged 4-5 years at ABA Kepuh Wetan Kindergarten Yogyakarta, with a total of 15 children.

2.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using the Miles & Huberman flow model. The data analysis technique employed in this paper is the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2013) model. This model comprises three interrelated steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The data analysis used conversation techniques based on Tannen's (2005:160) theory. The steps involved in this process were: (1) Selecting recordings that met the requirements. (2) Listening repeatedly and carefully. (3) Transcribing conversations by coding speakers and talking lists. (4) Classifying linguistic phenomena such as turn-taking based on the topic of each conversation. (5) Identifying turn-taking. (6) Interpreting the



findings, and (7) Concluding the findings. A credibility test, transferability test, dependability test, and objectivity test were conducted to ensure the data validity of this research.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Finding

The principal outcomes of a research project, including suggested, revealed, or indicated findings, should be presented consecutively and discussed afterward. The text emphasizes the importance of clear, concise results that summarize scientific findings, highlighting differences between the results and previous publications by other researchers.

The results of the data analysis revealed three distinct types of politeness strategies employed by children aged 4-5 years at ABA Kepuh Wetan Kindergarten Yogyakarta. These strategies are as follows:

a. Direct Strategy or What It Is Without Pleasantries (Bold on Record)

The direct or no-nonsense strategy is children's most prevalent form of apologizing strategy. This strategy entails the speaker not taking action to mitigate the threat to the interlocutor. This strategy is a concise, transparent, unambiguous, and direct method of expressing oneself without introducing distractions. This form of communication is most commonly utilized by children between the ages of four and five at ABA Kepuh Wetan Kindergarten Yogyakarta.

Based on the results of the data analysis, the acquisition of the Bold on Record strategy was observed in 15 utterances. The following are examples of the use of the Bold on Record strategy.

Mirza: "Tan, aku minta maaf ya" (Sambil berjabat tangan) Mirza: "Tan, I'm sorry"
(apology conveyed while shaking hands)
Natan: "Ya"
Natan: "Yes"

Khaira: "Aku minta maaf ya" (tanpa basa-basi)

Khaira: "I'm sorry" (apology conveyed without any pleasantries)

Dania: "iya"

Dania: "Yes"

The example above is a form of Bold on Record strategy, as Mirza apologizes to



Natan without any pleasantries. This strategy refers to the speaker who does nothing to reduce the threat to the interlocutor's face. The two examples above illustrate a form of Bold on Record strategy. Mirza's apology is clear, brief, concise, and unambiguous. He does not minimize distractions by referring to Brown & Levinson's opinion, which suggests that this strategy is employed when speakers have the same social distance and an asymmetrical relationship. Both parties are at the same level of social distance (one-way). Consequently, the Bold on Record strategy is most commonly observed in instances of children apologizing to one another, as there is no social distance between them.

b. Positive Politeness Strategy

The second strategy employed by children in the act of apologizing is the positive politeness strategy. Based on the results of the data analysis, not all categories of positive politeness strategies are utilized. The positive politeness strategies utilized by children in the act of apologizing are as follows:

1) Using Forms of Group Solidarity

The first politeness strategy is a positive politeness strategy that employs a form of group solidarity. Children use this strategy when they apologize to their friends. One of the purposes of utilizing this strategy is to elicit a favorable response from the speechpartner. The following are illustrative examples of utterances made by children.

Khafa: "Din, aku sama teman-teman minta maaf ya, karena sudah buat kamu nangis"

Khafa: "Din, my friends and I apologize for making you cry."

Andin: Diam tidak menjawab

Andin: Did not respond verbally.

Khafa: "Din, kok kamu diam aja?" (sambil mendekati dan meraih tangan Andin)

Khafa: "Din, why are you so quiet?"

(As Khafa approaches Andin and grasps his hand.)

Andin: Diam tidak menjawab

Andin: Did not respond verbally.

Khafa: "Bu Guru, Andin nggak mau maafin kita"

Khafa: ""Teacher, Andin is reluctant to forgive us."

Teacher: "What is the problem?"



Guru: “Ada apa ini?” Mbak Andin, ini teman-teman mau minta maaf, Mbak Andin mau maafin teman-teman nggak ya?” Semuanya sini salim sama Mbak Andin”.

Teacher: Mbak Andin, these friends wish to apologize; Mbak Andin wishes to apologize to my friends?" please come and salute Mbak Andin."

Andin: Mengulurkan tangan

Andin extends a hand.

Khafa, seated at the front, fell to the ground due to the forceful pushing of his companions. Khafa fell to the ground and began to sob.

The preceding discourse illustrates Khafa's attempt to communicate politely, utilizing the phrase "I and my friends." This phrase exemplifies a strategy of group solidarity. This strategy makes the speaker's message polite to their interlocutor. This approach often elicits a favorable response, facilitating the establishment of communication and a sense of sympathy.

2) Praise as a Strategy for Apologizing

One of the politeness strategies children employ when apologizing is to praise their speech partners. This strategy is used to elicit positive affect in the speech partner, facilitating effective communication. The following is an illustrative example of the speaker's speech, in which the speaker praises the speech partner.

Nafisa: “*Gambarmu itu bagus kok, maaf ya kemarin aku bilang jelek*”

Nafisa: "Your drawing is exceptional; I apologize for my previous critique."

Ajeng: “*Iya*”

Ajeng: "Affirmative."

The preceding discourse exemplifies the speaker's strategy of praising his speech partner. The speech above employs a form of praise directed towards a friend who is adept at drawing and can complete tasks promptly. It is anticipated that this strategy will result in speech partners feeling gratified. Furthermore, the communication relationship will be harmonious due to the praise from the speech participants.

3) Seeking Agreement

The objective of children who employ the positive apology politeness strategy is to gain the agreement of others to achieve their desired outcomes.

Example:



Rais: "Tan aku tadi sudah minta maaf sama kamu, ya?"

Aku pinjam krayonnya ya?"

Rais: "Tan, I apologized to you earlier, did I not?"

"I borrowed the crayons, did I not?"

Natan: "Iya, tapi warna hitam nggak ada"

Natan: "Affirmative, but I lack the black color."

Rais: "Nggak papa Tan"

Rais: "It's okay, Tan."

The preceding speech is an instance of politeness strategy, employing the form of seeking Agreement. In this case, Rais employs apologizing to gain approval from Natan to lend crayons. In this instance, apologizing is used to seek an Agreement. It is plausible that had Rais not apologized to Natan, he would not have been granted permission to borrow the crayons. In conclusion, the apologetic strategy is employed to seek Agreement, thereby facilitating Rais's attainment of the desired outcome.

4) Requesting or Providing Explanations

Children often need to be accompanied when applying positive politeness strategies in apologizing. When apologizing, it is because they usually have to give reasons or ask the interlocutor for reasons first so that they can do activities together.

Dewi: "Aku nggak mau main sama kamu.

Kamu kan kemarin yang nyobekin kertasnya aku"

Dewi: "I am disinclined to engage in play with you.

Yesterday, you tore my paper."

Anggita: "Aku kan sudah minta maaf kemarin"

Anggita: "I have already offered an apology, which was conveyed yesterday."

Dewi: "Tapi nanti kamu jangan nyobekin kertas nya lagi"

Dewi: "However, it would be preferable not to tear up the paper again."

Anggita: "Iya-iya maaf".

Anggita: "I offer my sincerest apologies."

Context: The utterance in question occurred when Dewi was engaged in play on the swing, and then Anggita approached and sat in front of Dewi.



Using positive politeness strategies, such as offering or requesting reasons, can facilitate the comprehension of individuals who have committed an offense by elucidating the rationale behind the absence of an apology. The utterance above illustrates how Dewi explained to Anggita if she wished to avoid playing together due to an error that Anggita had committed. Anggita then inquired about why Dewi refused to play together despite Dewi's apology. The politeness strategy described above can mitigate conflict by facilitating the exchange of reasons.

Another illustrative example is as follows:

Rashad: "Aku nggak mau deket sama Ghiyyan."

Rashad: "I don't want to be close to Ghiyyan."

Guru: "Nggak boleh gitu, kan semuanya teman."

Teacher: "You can't do that; they're all friends."

Rashad: "Ghiyyan jahat"

Rashad: "Ghiyyan is bad."

Guru: "Ghiyyan minta maaf dulu sini sama teman-teman biar Ghiyyan punya banyak teman."

Teacher: "Ghiyyan must apologize to my friends first so that I can have more friends."

Rashad: "Tadi Ghiyyan mukul Khayra."

Rashad: "Ghiyyan hit Khayra earlier."

Ghiyyan: "Tadi Ghiyyan tidak sengaja."

Ghiyyan: "It was an accident."

Rhasad asked for an explanation or reason when Ghiyan apologized to him. Ghiyyan then explained that when playing, he accidentally hit Rhasad's hand.

c. Negative Politeness Strategy

In the act of apologizing, children also utilize negative politeness strategies. In this study, the specific negative politeness strategy identified is a form of pessimistic attitude. For illustrative purposes, consider the following example:

Memei: "Bu Guru, Alin nggak mau maafin Meimei"

Memei: "Teacher, Alin is unwilling to forgive Meimei."

Guru: "Meimei, Alin kenapa?"

Teacher: "Meimei, what is the nature of Alin's reluctance to forgive?"



Alin: “*Kemarin Meimei matahin peraut aku*”

Alin: "Yesterday, Meimei damaged my boat."

Meimei: “*Iya, tapi aku nggak sengaja*”

Meimei: "Yes, but I did not intend to do so."

Guru: “*Ya sudah, sekarang Meimei minta maaf sama Alin ya...*”

Teacher: "Yes, now Meimei is apologizing to Alin..."

Meimei: “*Alin aku minta maaf ya?*” (sambil mengulurkan tangan)

(Alin diam dengan ekspresi kesal)

Meimei: "Alin, I offer my sincere apologies." (While extending her hand)

(Alin remains silent, displaying an annoyed expression)

Alin, seated adjacent to Meimei, remained silent in response to verbal communication. It appears that Alin has not yet forgiven Meimei, given that Meimei inadvertently damaged Alin's character link.

Alin presents her arguments in a pessimistic manner. Upon receiving an apology directly from Meimei, Alin remained silent, displaying no indication of acceptance or acknowledgment through either verbal response or facial expression.

This research is consistent with the findings of Setyowati (2020), Fauziah et al. (2023), and Wiranty and Ramaniar (2023). It should be noted that this study does not include a bald off-speech strategy, as also mentioned in Brown and Levinson (1987) and Ogiermann (2009).

3.2. Discussion

This research provides significant findings indicating that children aged 4-5 can apply politeness in language. The language politeness emphasized in this study is that of apologizing. The new finding stressed in this study shows that children use more politeness in apologizing with positive politeness strategies than other strategies. Nevertheless, further research is required to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the politeness of apologizing. Increasing the number of participants and the study duration longitudinally is necessary to achieve this. A research model incorporating these variables can provide a more detailed insight into the politeness of apologizing, considering age, gender, and family background.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Conclusion

This study aims to describe the strategy of apologizing in children aged 4 to 5 years. At the age of four, children have begun to utilize complete sentences. At the age of four, children demonstrate improved pronunciation and grammar. This research is evidenced by the child's capacity to interact socially and to identify methods of communication that facilitate the resolution of misunderstandings with peers. Most research on language politeness strategies focuses on quantity and quality maxims. This study aims to ascertain the nature of language politeness in early childhood when apologizing. The results indicated that children employed three distinct politeness strategies in their apologies, namely (1) direct or bald on-record apologies, (2) positive politeness strategies, and (3) negative politeness strategies. The positive politeness strategies identified in this study employ various techniques, including those that utilize forms of group solidarity, those that offer or promise something, those that seek agreement, and those that request or provide explanations. The negative politeness strategy observed is limited to the pessimistic technique of apologizing.

4.2. Suggestions

In the context of early childhood, language politeness is employed as a strategy for apologizing. The early childhood strategies align with Brown and Levinson's perspectives. Nevertheless, further research could be conducted by increasing the number of participants, focusing on age and gender. Hopefully, future research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how children apologize by applying language politeness.

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