

## THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS; GREETINGS AND THE WAYS OF EXPRESSING POLITENESS

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**Annotation:** It is the aim of this research paper to analyze how politeness currently is - and how politeness potentially could be - taught in foreign language classrooms. The focus will be on how foreign language students are - or could be - instructed to perform speech acts that usually require forms of politeness. Teaching politeness will not be reduced to the introduction of cultural stereotypes and basic rules of behavior in language teaching, it will rather be understood as all forms of the pragmatic knowledge required to develop true intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language student. It is argued that currently teaching pragmatics only plays a minor role in foreign language teaching, but that this knowledge is crucial to build up intercultural communicative competence as it is demanded by the CEFR and foreign language curricula. To prove this thesis, current textbooks for teaching English as a foreign language will be examined for teaching activities that include aspects of foreign language pragmatics or politeness.

**Key words:** *teaching methods, English language, classroom, activities, politeness, expressions, study, school, education*

Learning English is basically learning to use English language and this often means learning the grammatical structures, uttering them in good English pronunciation. In Indonesia, English language is a third language or a foreign language learned after Indonesia language studied as a second language and used as a means of communication and a medium of instruction at schools. While the students commonly use the first language or mother tongue out of school contexts, English language is confined only within English classes and it is, thus, seen as foreign language.

English being an international language and the most widely used language in international communication, it is learned in non-English countries for a number of related purposes, but three main modes have been prevalent: acquisition of knowledge, technology and economic development. The introduction of the English language in Indonesia is also associated with the modes above, but the use of English materials in the classes might bring the risk of introducing English cultures that might be unsuitable to the cultures of the students. This is because, as Kramsch suggests that, culture and language are connected in many ways as language is used for interaction in social life.

English culture, often associated with Western Culture, comprises the cultures of the communities in Kachru's Inner Circle (i.e. the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand) [2]. The culture might be different from other cultures including from those of students learning English as a foreign language. As the students themselves might face cultural diversity within their own culture, learning alien English-related cultures might add more complicated and challenging situations in EFL contexts. In Indonesia, for example, the students are faced with numerous cultures within the national sphere apart from the students' own local cultures.

Politeness as one aspect of culture would then be conceptually and used interchangeably in Indonesian context. To Yule, politeness is a social concept reflected in social behavior governed in the form social etiquette [1].

Thus, politeness concerns with polite verbal and nonverbal conducts. In Indonesian context, the need to teach politeness is confirmed by government regulation by implementing in this curriculum 2013 (K13) focus on student center. The core competencies (KI) in this curriculum 2013 (K13) consist of four competencies; and one of core competencies (KI) is implementing polite behavior which it clearly states that politeness is as one of the characters that teachers should teach in their classrooms.

Besides, Politeness is an important positive character for students should acquire in learning process. Having polite character would enable students to respect and get respects from teachers and other students, and this will create positive learning environment.

In English language classrooms this character is not taught directly, but it is integrated in the teaching and learning process. The integration can be through teaching language functions such as apologizing, greeting, respecting, and thanking where the polite verbal and nonverbal expressions are used in the classroom. The way to perform politeness, however, could be different between Indonesian and English culture. As students could use local language knowledge to learn English language they could also possible to use local culture to learn English culture [3]. This paper explores the role of local cultural politeness on learning English politeness at Mts. Darul Qur'an. Politeness is an important positive character that students should acquire in learning process. In English language classrooms this character of politeness is not taught directly, but it is integrated in the teaching and learning process. The integration can be through teaching language functions such as apologizing, greeting, respecting, and thanking where the polite verbal and nonverbal expressions are used. The way to perform politeness, however, could be different between Indonesian and English culture. As students could use local language knowledge to learn English language, they could also possible use local culture while learning English. Politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson were used such as, bold on-record in apologize, positive politeness in greeting, respecting, and thanking as well as negative politeness

in apologizing. Incorporating politeness in English language classroom is recommended as it would create positive, non- threatening and comfortable language classroom atmosphere which facilitate students' learning.

**References:**

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