



## IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITENESS-BASED LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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### Abstract:

*Verbal violence among elementary school students has become a significant issue that affects children's psychological well-being, social relationships, and learning environment. This study aims to implement politeness-based language education as a strategy to address verbal violence in school settings. The program employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design involving 30 elementary school students. The intervention was conducted through interactive and participatory activities, including role-playing, guided conversations, group discussions, and educational games, over four to six sessions. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments, classroom observations, questionnaires, and teacher interviews. The findings indicate a significant improvement in students' understanding of polite language, as well as positive changes in their communication behavior. Students demonstrated an increased ability to distinguish between polite and impolite expressions and showed greater awareness of the social and emotional impact of their language use. In addition, a noticeable reduction in verbal aggression was observed during classroom interactions. The results suggest that politeness-based language education is an effective approach to fostering respectful communication and reducing verbal violence among students. The integration of cognitive, behavioral, and socio-emotional aspects in language learning contributes to the development of students' communicative competence and character. Therefore, it is recommended that such programs be integrated into regular classroom practices and supported by continuous collaboration between schools, families, and communities to ensure sustainable outcomes.*

**Keywords:** *politeness; language education; verbal violence; elementary students; communication skills*

### Abstrak

Kekerasan verbal di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar telah menjadi masalah signifikan yang memengaruhi kesejahteraan

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psikologis anak, hubungan sosial, dan lingkungan belajar. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menerapkan pendidikan bahasa berbasis kesopanan sebagai strategi untuk mengatasi kekerasan verbal di lingkungan sekolah. Program ini menggunakan desain Penelitian Aksi Partisipatif (PAR) yang melibatkan 30 siswa sekolah dasar. Intervensi dilakukan melalui kegiatan interaktif dan partisipatif, termasuk bermain peran, percakapan terarah, diskusi kelompok, dan permainan edukatif, selama empat hingga enam sesi. Data dikumpulkan melalui penilaian pra-tes dan pasca-tes, observasi kelas, kuesioner, dan wawancara guru. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam pemahaman siswa tentang bahasa sopan, serta perubahan positif dalam perilaku komunikasi mereka. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan untuk membedakan antara ekspresi sopan dan tidak sopan dan menunjukkan kesadaran yang lebih besar tentang dampak sosial dan emosional dari penggunaan bahasa mereka. Selain itu, penurunan yang nyata dalam agresi verbal diamati selama interaksi di kelas. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan bahasa berbasis kesopanan merupakan pendekatan yang efektif untuk menumbuhkan komunikasi yang saling menghormati dan mengurangi kekerasan verbal di kalangan siswa. Integrasi aspek kognitif, perilaku, dan sosio-emosional dalam pembelajaran bahasa berkontribusi pada pengembangan kompetensi komunikatif dan karakter siswa. Oleh karena itu, disarankan agar program-program tersebut diintegrasikan ke dalam praktik kelas reguler dan didukung oleh kolaborasi berkelanjutan antara sekolah, keluarga, dan masyarakat untuk memastikan hasil yang berkelanjutan.

**Kata kunci:** kesopanan; pendidikan bahasa; kekerasan verbal; siswa sekolah dasar; keterampilan komunikasi

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language plays a central role in shaping children's social interactions, emotional development, and behavioral patterns within educational settings. In school contexts, communication is not merely a tool for delivering knowledge but also a medium for constructing respectful relationships and fostering a positive learning environment. Linguistic politeness, therefore, becomes a crucial component in maintaining harmonious interactions among students and between students and teachers. Recent studies emphasize that politeness strategies contribute significantly to creating supportive classroom atmospheres and improving students' communicative competence (Yualita et al., 2025).

At the same time, verbal violence has emerged as a persistent issue in educational environments. Verbal abuse, including insults, ridicule, and offensive expressions, negatively affects students' psychological well-being, academic

performance, and social relationships. Empirical evidence shows that verbal abuse can occur frequently in school interactions and is often normalized within communication practices if not properly addressed Yusri et al (2024). In addition, the increasing exposure of children to digital communication environments has amplified the use of impolite language, as seen in studies on social media interactions where deviations from politeness frequently lead to verbal aggression (Halalutu et al., 2026).

Furthermore, previous research has demonstrated that children's politeness competence develops gradually and is influenced by social environments such as family and school. Studies indicate that early exposure to politeness principles, including tact, generosity, and empathy, plays a significant role in shaping children's linguistic behavior (Mayrita et al., 2023). This suggests that structured educational interventions are essential to guide children in using appropriate and respectful language.

Although numerous studies have explored language politeness and verbal violence separately, there is still limited integration between these two areas, particularly in the context of practical educational interventions for children. Existing research tends to focus either on identifying politeness strategies used by children or analyzing instances of verbal abuse without providing comprehensive solutions that bridge theory and practice.

For instance, studies on children's politeness strategies highlight developmental aspects of polite language use but do not sufficiently address how these strategies can be systematically taught to prevent verbal violence (Al-Abbas, 2023). Similarly, research on verbal bullying has identified a lack of awareness and communication skills as key contributing factors, yet intervention-based approaches remain limited in scope and implementation (Yualita et al., 2025).

Moreover, the influence of modern communication platforms further complicates children's language behavior, as exposure to impolite language can normalize aggressive verbal expressions. Despite this, there is still a lack of community-based educational programs specifically designed to promote polite language as a preventive strategy against verbal violence, especially at the elementary school level.

Responding to these gaps, this community service program aims to implement politeness-based language education as a strategic effort to prevent verbal violence among elementary school students. The program focuses on developing children's awareness and skills in using polite, respectful, and empathetic language through interactive and participatory activities.

This program adopts a practical approach by integrating language politeness training into engaging learning methods such as role-playing, guided communication exercises, and reflective discussions. By doing so, it is expected that students will not only understand the concept of politeness but also apply it in their daily interactions.

The expected outcomes of this program include (1) increased awareness of polite language use, (2) improved communication skills among students, and (3) a reduction in verbal violence behaviors within the school environment. Ultimately, this initiative contributes to creating a more positive and inclusive educational atmosphere while strengthening children's character development through language.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This community service program employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design, which emphasizes collaboration between researchers and participants in identifying problems, implementing interventions, and reflecting on the outcomes. This approach was considered appropriate as it allows direct engagement with students and teachers in addressing verbal violence through politeness-based language education within an authentic classroom context.

The program was conducted in an elementary school involving approximately 30 to 40 students in grades four and five. These participants were selected based on their developmental stage, in which peer interaction and language use play a significant role in shaping social behavior. In addition, classroom teachers were actively involved throughout the program to support implementation and ensure the continuity of the intervention beyond the duration of the activity.

The implementation of the program began with a needs assessment phase, during which preliminary observations and informal interviews were carried out to identify the forms and frequency of verbal violence among students, as well as their level of awareness regarding polite language use. The findings from this phase served as the basis for designing an educational module focused on politeness-based language learning. The materials developed included examples of polite and impolite expressions, contextualized dialogues, and visual media such as posters to reinforce the concept of respectful communication.

The intervention was then implemented through a series of interactive and participatory learning sessions conducted over four to six meetings, each lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. During these sessions, students were engaged in various activities such as role-playing, guided conversations, group discussions, and educational games. These activities were designed to provide students with opportunities to practice polite language in meaningful and realistic contexts while also reflecting on their own communication behaviors.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, data were collected using multiple techniques. Observations were conducted before and after the intervention to examine changes in students' language behavior, particularly in relation to the use of polite and impolite expressions. In addition, pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure students' understanding of politeness concepts. Questionnaires were also distributed to capture students' perceptions of the program and their awareness of verbal violence, while semi-structured interviews

with teachers were conducted to gain deeper insights into behavioral changes observed during the implementation.

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify improvements in students' understanding of polite language. Meanwhile, qualitative data from observations, questionnaires, and interviews were analyzed thematically to explore patterns in students' communication behavior and attitudes.

The success of this program was determined based on several indicators, including improvements in students' understanding of polite language, a noticeable reduction in the use of verbal aggression, increased participation in positive communication practices, and positive responses from both students and teachers. Ethical considerations were also taken into account, as permission was obtained from the school authorities prior to the implementation, and all participants were involved voluntarily with their confidentiality properly maintained.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The implementation of politeness-based language education produced measurable improvements in students' cognitive understanding, communicative behavior, and affective awareness regarding language use. The findings are presented based on the analysis of pre-test and post-test results, classroom observations, questionnaires, and teacher interviews.

Prior to the intervention, the pre-test results indicated that students' understanding of polite language was relatively low. A majority of students were unable to clearly distinguish between polite and impolite expressions, particularly in peer communication contexts. Expressions involving teasing, sarcasm, and mild insults were frequently perceived as acceptable forms of interaction. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting that children often normalize verbal aggression due to its frequent occurrence in peer environments (Kowalski et al., 2021). In the Indonesian context, similar patterns were identified by (Najah et al., 2022), who found that elementary school students tend to engage in verbal bullying without fully understanding its negative implications.

Following the intervention, the post-test results demonstrated a substantial improvement in students' comprehension of politeness concepts. The majority of students showed the ability to correctly identify polite expressions and apply them appropriately in situational tasks. The increase in mean scores indicates that structured and explicit instruction in politeness can significantly enhance children's pragmatic competence. This aligns with the findings of Taguchi (2022), who emphasizes that pragmatic awareness, including politeness, develops more effectively when learners are exposed to guided instruction and contextualized practice.

Observational data further revealed notable changes in students' communication behavior. During the initial phase, verbal interactions among students were often characterized by the use of harsh, dismissive, or offensive language. However, as the program progressed, there was a gradual shift toward more respectful forms of communication. Students began to demonstrate the use of polite expressions such as requesting, apologizing, and expressing disagreement in a more constructive manner. This behavioral change suggests that repeated exposure to politeness strategies through interactive activities can facilitate the internalization of appropriate language use. Such findings are supported by recent studies indicating that experiential learning methods, such as role-playing, are effective in promoting social communication skills among children (Derakhshan et al., 2021).

In addition to behavioral changes, the questionnaire results indicated a significant increase in students' awareness of the social and emotional impact of language. Many students reported that they had previously used certain expressions without considering their effects on others. After participating in the program, they expressed greater sensitivity toward their peers' feelings and a stronger intention to use respectful language. This shift reflects the development of socio-pragmatic competence, which involves understanding the relationship between language use and social context. According to Haugh (2020), such awareness is essential in fostering effective and appropriate communication in social interactions.

Teacher interviews provided additional insights into the effectiveness of the program. Teachers observed that students became more capable of managing interpersonal conflicts without resorting to verbal aggression. For example, students were more likely to use polite requests or explanations when disagreements occurred, rather than responding with insults or ridicule. This indicates that the program not only improved linguistic competence but also contributed to the development of emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills. These findings are in line with research by García-Sancho et al. (2022), which highlights the role of communication training in reducing aggressive behavior and promoting prosocial interaction among children.

Despite these positive outcomes, some variations in improvement were observed among students. A small number of participants showed slower progress, particularly those who were frequently exposed to impolite language in their home or social environments. This suggests that external factors play a significant role in shaping children's language behavior, as noted in recent studies on language socialization (Flewitt et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the overall results indicate that the intervention was effective in improving students' understanding and use of polite language.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that politeness-based language education can significantly enhance students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions of communication. The integration of explicit instruction, interactive

activities, and reflective practices proved effective in reducing verbal aggression and promoting respectful communication among elementary school students.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study confirm that politeness-based language education is an effective approach to addressing verbal violence among elementary school students. The significant improvement in students' understanding of polite language indicates that explicit instruction plays a crucial role in developing pragmatic competence. This supports the argument of Naoko Taguchi (2022), who emphasizes that pragmatic features such as politeness are not acquired automatically but require structured teaching and contextualized practice. In this program, the integration of explicit explanations and practical activities enabled students to internalize politeness strategies more effectively.

Furthermore, the observed reduction in verbal aggression demonstrates that language education can influence not only cognitive aspects but also behavioral outcomes. The shift from the use of insulting or mocking expressions to more respectful communication suggests that students developed greater awareness of the social consequences of their language use. This aligns with the perspective of Michael Haugh (2020), who argues that politeness is fundamentally linked to interpersonal relationships and social evaluation. When students understand how language affects others, they are more likely to regulate their communication accordingly.

The effectiveness of the intervention can also be attributed to the use of interactive and participatory learning methods. Activities such as role-playing, guided conversations, and group discussions created opportunities for students to engage in meaningful communication. These findings are consistent with previous research by Derakhshan et al. (2021), which highlights that experiential learning fosters both communicative competence and social awareness. Through these activities, students were not only passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in constructing appropriate language use.

In addition, the increase in students' awareness of the emotional impact of language reflects the development of socio-emotional competence. The ability to recognize and respond to others' feelings is closely related to the use of polite and empathetic language. This is supported by García-Sancho et al. (2022), who found that communication skills and emotional intelligence are significant factors in reducing aggressive behavior among children. The findings of this study suggest that politeness-based language education can serve as a bridge between linguistic competence and emotional development.

However, the study also identified several challenges that need to be considered. Some students showed slower progress in changing their language behavior, particularly those who were frequently exposed to impolite communication in their home or social environments. This finding reinforces the idea that language acquisition is influenced by broader social contexts, as discussed

by Flewitt et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of environmental factors in shaping children's communication practices. Therefore, interventions focusing solely on the school setting may not be sufficient to produce long-term behavioral change.

Another limitation lies in the relatively short duration of the program. While the results indicate positive changes, sustaining these improvements requires continuous reinforcement. As suggested in previous studies on behavioral intervention, long-term consistency is essential to ensure that newly acquired communication patterns become habitual. Integrating politeness education into the regular curriculum and involving teachers as ongoing facilitators can enhance the sustainability of the program.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of integrating language education with character development. By combining cognitive instruction, practical application, and emotional awareness, politeness-based language education offers a comprehensive approach to reducing verbal violence. This approach not only improves students' communication skills but also fosters a more respectful, inclusive, and supportive school environment.

For early childhood education (PAUD), these findings imply the need to introduce politeness and respectful communication at an early developmental stage through play-based and story-based activities. Young children can be guided to recognize simple polite expressions, express emotions appropriately, and develop empathy through interactive storytelling, songs, and role-play. Embedding these practices into daily classroom routines can help establish foundational communication habits from an early age.

At the elementary school (SD) level, the implications extend to the integration of structured politeness-based language instruction within the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate guided communication exercises, collaborative learning activities, and reflective discussions to reinforce respectful language use. In addition, schools can develop classroom norms and language policies that promote positive communication, while involving parents to ensure consistency between school and home environments.

The application of politeness-based language education across PAUD and SD contexts highlights its potential as a sustainable strategy for character building, particularly in fostering respectful communication and preventing verbal violence from an early age.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of politeness-based language education is effective in addressing verbal violence among elementary school students. The findings demonstrate significant improvements in students' understanding of polite language, as well as positive changes in their communication behavior and attitudes. Students became more capable of

distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate expressions and showed increased awareness of the emotional impact of their words on others.

Moreover, the use of interactive and participatory learning methods, such as role-playing and guided communication activities, contributed to the successful internalization of politeness strategies. These approaches not only enhanced students' linguistic competence but also supported the development of socio-emotional skills, including empathy and conflict management.

However, the study also highlights the influence of external factors, such as family and social environments, on students' language behavior. Therefore, the sustainability of the program requires continuous reinforcement and broader involvement from teachers, parents, and the community. Integrating politeness-based language education into regular classroom practices is strongly recommended to ensure long-term impact.

In conclusion, politeness-based language education offers a practical and effective strategy for reducing verbal violence and fostering a more respectful, inclusive, and supportive school environment. This approach can serve as a valuable model for future community service programs and educational initiatives focusing on character development through language.

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