

Linguistic Politeness in Apologies: Comparing Strategies of Bruneian and Indonesian University Students

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Abstract

Linguistic politeness, especially in apology situations, is essential for maintaining social harmony and ensuring effective communication across different cultural contexts. The study aimed to examine linguistic politeness among university students in the context of apologies. The study compared politeness strategies between Bruneian and Indonesian university students from different universities. Data were collected using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) method, where respondents were presented with specific situations or scenarios and asked to express what they would say in those situations. The data was analysed using the politeness model by Brown and Levinson (1987). The study found that students used positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, and bald-on-record strategies. The study's results show that positive politeness strategies are the most frequently used. The results also indicated that in using politeness in apologies, students employed several sub-strategies, such as greetings, promising, providing reasons, taking responsibility, understanding the interlocutor's desires, and using titles for interlocutors with higher social status. This research can serve as a guide and lesson for improving linguistic politeness among university students, especially when apologising.

Keywords: Politeness strategies; apologies; cross-cultural comparison; Brunei; Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

Linguistic politeness refers to using polite, appropriate, and suitable language for a particular situation or context (Haugh, 2004). According to Kumari, (2015) linguistic politeness occurs during individual interactions. It involves the manner of speaking, word choice, and how messages are delivered to show politeness toward the listener or interlocutor. This aligns with Tubi et al., (2021) who states that linguistic politeness involves refined and respectful speech that adheres to principles of politeness to please the interlocutor. Practicing linguistic politeness can create a pleasant atmosphere for the interlocutor and build positive and harmonious communication relationships. Linguistic politeness is also crucial to better understanding between individuals involved in an interaction.

Using appropriate greetings or honorifics demonstrates respect towards the interlocutor, especially in formal situations or when speaking to individuals with higher social status (Lee, 2022). Using rude or potentially offensive language should be avoided to prevent conflicts or disputes. Linguistic politeness encompasses the words used and other aspects such as intonation, tone, body language, and communication context (Izadi, 2015). Tone and intonation during speech can affect the perception of politeness. Using a

low and polite tone of voice can foster good communication and mutual respect (Lee, 2022). Therefore, linguistic politeness is an essential aspect of communication for establishing positive relationships among individuals. By understanding and applying the principles of linguistic politeness, one can build more effective and positive communication in various social and cultural contexts.

Apologizing is one of the significant forms of speech acts in social interactions and is essential in everyday life regardless of age. Apologies can be conveyed verbally or in writing, acknowledging mistakes, expressing regret for the adverse effects caused, and intending to rectify the situation and relationships affected by the mistakes (Maddux et al., 2011). Anshori, (2018) supports this view, stating that apologizing involves acknowledging errors and expressing repentance. Cahyono et al., (2020) also argue that an apology refers to admitting one's mistake to prevent the prolongation of the problem. Additionally, apologizing shapes a person's good character and ethics, encouraging individuals to respect and value their interlocutors more. Maruti, (2016) emphasizes that an apology needs to incorporate linguistic politeness to be accepted as a sign of responsibility for maintaining harmony in communication.

Politeness in apologies is an important aspect of communication in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia. In Indonesia, various ways to express apologies politely without sounding too formal are used. Lailiyah, (2021) agrees, stating that apologies in Indonesia are expressed in various ways to rectify mistakes. Several studies have been conducted on speech acts of apology in Indonesia, such as Al-Rawafi et al., (2021; Ardiati, (2022); Maruti, (2021), focusing on students' apologies in Indonesian contexts and the influence of Islamic values, they are emphasizing the importance of understanding culture and linguistics in apology strategies. Wahab et al. (2021) conducted a study comparing politeness and impoliteness among Malay Language students, finding that students adhere to all six maxims proposed by Leech (1983). Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) conducted a cross-cultural study on speech acts of requests and apologies among Western cultures, proving that pragmatic principles are universal across languages and cultures.

Studies on the use of linguistic politeness in various situations have received wide attention among researchers using different approaches (Dawi & Abas, 2020; Hamzah et al., 2011; Hassan et al., 2020; Makhtar, 2016; Wahab et al., 2021; Zahidah et al., 2023). However, previous studies show that research on politeness in the context of apologies among students, especially in Southeast Asia, such as Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia, is still underrepresented. This aligns with Maros, (2011), who states that cross-cultural studies of interactions are relatively new in linguistics. Comparing two countries with different cultures and social contexts provides valuable insights into how politeness is understood, expressed, and practised in society. Therefore, this study is novel in its approach to comparing apology strategies between these two specific Southeast Asian countries, a topic that has been underexplored in previous studies.

Based on the above-mentioned issues, this research aims to analyze the politeness strategies used by Bruneian and Indonesian students in expressing apologies. The questions addressed in this research are: What forms of politeness strategies are used by BDS and IS in expressing apologies? How are politeness strategies used by Bruneian and Indonesian students in expressing apologies?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study utilizes the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) method to obtain data related to politeness strategies in apologies among Bruneian and Indonesian students. This method is commonly used in linguistic research to analyze how respondents react to given situations or scenarios (Chintawidy & Sartini, 2022; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Sa'd, 2014;

Yusefi et al., 2015). The DCT method is specifically useful for studying particular aspects of language politeness in contexts such as apologies or expressing opinions (Mohammadi & Sa'd, 2013; Nisa, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2021). In this study, the DCT includes five situations or events that require forgiveness for committed mistakes. These situations, created by the researcher, relate to common occurrences in university life, such as forgetting to return a borrowed book to a lecturer, scratching a friend's car, not cooperating in a group assignment, and spilling drinks on a friend's worksheet.

The advantage of using the DCT method in this research is that it allows the researcher to indirectly examine respondents' responses to provided communication situations in the questionnaire. According to Yusof et al., (2011) the DCT method enables researchers to quickly collect and process data. Additionally, this method allows for a deeper analysis of the politeness strategies used by respondents in a specific language or cultural context. However, like other research methods, the DCT method also has its limitations, such as the possibility that respondents' answers in the questionnaire may not reflect their actual responses or actions in real-life situations.

Participants

The distributed questionnaire obtained responses from 101 participants, consisting of 54 Bruneian students (53.5%) and 47 Indonesian students (46.5%) from various backgrounds and universities. Table 1 below shows the demographic characteristics of respondents, including country, university/faculty, ethnicity, gender, and age. The data indicates that the majority of respondents are Bruneian students. The findings also show that 67 respondents are female, while 34 respondents are male. Additionally, the majority of respondents are aged between 22 and 24 years old.

Table 1. Demographic Information of BDS and IS

Category	Total
Students	
Brunei Darussalam	54
Indonesia	47
Gender	
Male	34
Female	67
Age	
19-21 years old	15
22-24 years old	72
25 years old and above	14
University/Faculty	
University A	27
University B	9
University C	16
University D	2
University E	16
University F	13
University G	5
University H	1
University I	6
University J	6

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The present study used a structured DCT questionnaire as a primary data collection instrument consisting of five scenarios schemed for apologising. The scenarios were relatively mundane: someone scraped a friend's car; someone spilt beverages on someone else's homework, but these are prototypical life-in-a-university-baseball-apology situations the researcher has so painstakingly crafted. All the scenarios follow, and each runner must react as they would in everyday life. Although not explicitly asking about politeness strategies, the DCT could be used to indirectly investigate how respondents might answer by measuring their reported communication in hypothetical scenarios. Though this method is cost-effective in data collection, it might need to include specific real-life responses, which can be considered a limitation. Data analysis used Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Model. This analysis aims to give some patterns and differences in how Bruneian and Indonesian students employed these strategies in making an apology. Further, the responses investigated for evidence of any cultural subtleties that might impinge on polite moves used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provide a comprehensive overview based on the first and second research questions. The first question focuses on the forms of politeness strategies, while the second question examines how politeness strategies in apologies are used by Bruneian and Indonesian students.

Forms of Linguistic Politeness Strategies and It's Use in Apologies

The research findings indicate that Bruneian (BDS) and Indonesian (IS) have similar tendencies to use Positive Politeness strategies, Negative Politeness strategies, and Bald-on Record strategies, which involve directly conveying their apologies to the interlocutor. The politeness strategies used are implicated through several sub-strategies to fulfill the positive and negative face of the recipient (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Positive Politeness

In expressing apologies, BDS and IS use five types of positive politeness sub-strategies: 1) Give attention, where students initiate communication with the interlocutor by greeting them, 2) Promise, students commit to not repeating mistakes and to rectify them, 3) Providing reasons, students offer explanations for the mistake made, 4) Understanding the unfulfilled desires of the listener, and 5) Responsible, students offer something as a sign of responsibility to the interlocutor to support their apology. By combining several of these sub-strategies, BDS and IS can convey their apologies politely and clearly. The use of the first sub-strategy by Bruneian students can be identified through the following data;

Situation 1

(BDS)

01 Ufpmb. 01

Salam, maaf Dr, saya lupa untuk membawa buku tersebut. Bolehlah saya mengembalikan buku tersebut esok?

(Salam, sorry Dr, I forgot to bring the book, Can I return the book tomorrow?)

Situation 2

02 Upmb. 50

Assalamualaikum Dr, saya minta maaf kerana terlambat menghantar tugas saya pada hari yang telah ditetapkan. Insyallah saya akan menghantarnya secepatnya.

(Assalamualaikum Dr, I am sorry for submitting my assignment late. Insyallah, I will submit it as soon as possible.)

Situation 1:

03 Unmm. 33

Assalamu'alaikum pak, maaf saya lupa membawa bukunya. InshaAllah saya akan kembalikan secepatnya esok pak.

(Assalamu'alaikum pak, I am sorry for forgetting to bring the book. InshaAllah, I will return it as soon as possible tomorrow pak)

(IS)

04 Uij. 18

Assalamualaikum Miss/Sir/pak/buk, saya minta maaf karena saya terlupa untuk menghantar tugasannya dan saya akan memberikan tugas secepat mungkin.

(Assalamualaikum Miss/Sir/pak/buk, I am sorry for forgetting to submit the assignment, and I will submit the assignment as soon as possible)

The extract in situation 1 data 01, 02, 03 and 04 shows that BDS and IS use Positive Politeness strategies in apologizing through the sub-strategy of giving attention, namely by greeting the lecturer before initiating communication and expressing the apology. According to Hamzah et al., (2011), the greeting *Salam/Assalamualaikum* is expressed by speakers to convey their wishes for the well-being of the interlocutor, because the greeting *Salam/Assalamualaikum* means 'Peace be upon you all'. A person's manners and politeness can be observed in their behavior and speech during communication. Greetings are also considered a strategy used to maintain the positive 'face' of individuals interacting, indicating their respect for the interlocutor. Therefore, the act of greeting is aimed at demonstrating humility. This is further explained by Johari & Zahid, (2016) in a study by striving to fulfill the positive 'face' desires of lecturers so that they feel attended to and valued.

Furthermore, BDS and IS use Positive Politeness strategies in apologizing through the sub-strategy of making promises. The use of this second sub-strategy can be identified through the following data;

Situation 2:

(BDS)

05 Upmb. 18

Maaf dr, saya terlupa menghantar tugas saya on time atas kecuaian saya sendiri. Bolehkah Dr memberikan saya peluang, saya berjanji akan menghantarnya hari ini

(Sorry dr, I forgot to submit my assignment on time due to my own mistake. Could you please give me a chance? **I promise to submit it today**)

Situation 3:

06 Upk. 53

(nama kawan)! Aku banar-banar minta maaf. Tadi masa ku bejalan pakai kereta mu, aku telanggar something kali tegarit kereta mu. Aku janji aku bayar ganti rugi. Sorry ah!

((friend's name)! I am really sorry. Earlier, while I was driving your car, I hit something and scratched your car. **I promise I will pay for the damages. Sorry!**)

Situation 4:

(IS)

07 Itbb. 35

Guyss, im really sorry, it just that I have a lot of assignment this month. But **I promise I will try to give my best to finish our article.** Im sorry again.

08 Uj. 45

Maaf semua, terima kasih atas tegurannya. Aku berjanji akan memperbaiki diriku dan memberikan kontribusi dalam tugasanku kali ini.

(Sorry everyone, thank you for your advice. **I promise to improve myself and contribute to this assignment**)

The extract in situation 2 where a student forgot to submit an assignment to the lecturer, while Situation 3 describes a student accidentally damaging a borrowed car from a friend. Based on data above, it can be seen that respondents make promises with the intention of rectifying their mistakes or avoiding repeating the same mistakes in the future. This action also helps build trust with the recipient of the apology. In this context, students promise lecturers to submit assignments, as seen in data 05, “*saya berjanji akan menghantarnya hari ini*”. The extract in Situation 4 is a situation where a student is reprimanded by group mates for not cooperating in completing an assignment. Based on data 07 and 08, it can be observed that the respondent makes a promise with the intention of rectifying the mistake or avoiding repeating the same mistake in the future. This action can also instill confidence in the recipient of the apology, in this context, the student promises to cooperate with their group mates in completing the assignment, as seen in data 07, “*I promise I will try to give my best to finish our article*”.

However, it is important to note that making promises after apologizing should be sincere and realistic, capable of being fulfilled as promised. This is also agreed upon by Anugrah et al., (2020), who stated that a promise is an obligation that must be fulfilled by the speaker, if not, the interlocutor will feel offended. Additionally, failing to fulfill a promise can reduce the trust between the speaker and the interlocutor. Therefore, making promises after apologizing is considered a form of positive politeness, as it demonstrates the speaker’s earnestness in correcting mistakes and maintaining relationships with the interlocutor.

Additionally, BDS and IS also use the sub-strategy of providing reasons when apologizing to the interlocutor. The use of this third sub-strategy can be identified through the following data;

Situation 1:

(BDS)

09 Uppmb. 02

Minta maaf Dr/Miss/Prof, buku yang Dr/Miss/Prof pinjamkan, tertinggal dirumah, in shaa allah esok saya balikkan

(Sorry Dr/Miss/Prof, the book you lent me **was left at home**, in shaa allah I will return it tomorrow)

(IS)

Situation 2:

10 Itbb. 38

*Salam, maaf pak/buk, saya terlupa menghantar tugasannya kemarin **karena ada sedikit masalah**. Insyallah saya akan menghantarnya secepat mungkin ya.*

(Salam, sorry pak/buk, I forgot to submit the assignment yesterday **because there was a little problem**. Insyallah I will submit it as soon as possible, ya)

Situation 3:

11 Unpb. 46

Aku minta maaf ya krn tadi ada kecelakaan sedikit, jadi calar mobil kamu. Insyallah nanti aku ganti uangnya ya.

(I'm sorry because **there was a little accident earlier**, so your car got scratched. Insyallah, I'll pay back the money later, ya)

The extract in situation 1 is an incident where a student forgot to bring a borrowed book from a lecturer. Based on data 09, it can be seen that the respondent provides the reason “*tertinggal dirumah*” (left at home) with the aim of eliciting sympathy from the interlocutor. Based on data 10, it can be seen that the respondent said, “*karena ada sedikit masalah*” with the aim of eliciting sympathy from the interlocutor. The more reasons given, the more likely the interlocutor will feel sympathetic towards the speaker. In Positive Politeness, the action of students stating reasons for making a mistake can be considered as an effort to maintain a good reputation by showing willingness to learn from mistakes. The reasons intended here are those that cannot be avoided, as in data 11, “*krn tadi ada kecelakaan sedikit*”. Providing reasons after apologizing for making a mistake can be seen as Positive Politeness, especially if the reasons provide an explanation of the situation that led to the mistake. However, reasons should not be used as a tool to evade responsibility for the mistake committed.

According to Maruti, (2016), the most common strategy for apologizing is by giving reasons. The more reasons given, the more likely the interlocutor will feel sympathetic towards the speaker. The reasons referred to here are those unavoidable circumstances that led the speaker to commit the mistake. Providing reasons after apologizing for a mistake can be considered a form of positive politeness, especially if the reasons explain the situation that caused the mistake. However, reasons should not be used as a tool to evade responsibility for the mistake made. In positive politeness, a student's act of giving reasons after making a mistake can be seen as an effort to maintain a good 'face' or reputation by demonstrating a willingness to learn from the mistake.

Next, the sub-strategy used by Bruneian students when apologizing is the act of understanding the unmet desires of the interlocutor. This can be seen through the following data;

Situation 1:

12 (BDS)
 12 Ufpmb. 01
Salam, maaf Dr saya lupa untuk membawa buku tersebut. Bolehlah saya mengembalikan buku tersebut esok?
 (Salam, sorry Dr I forgot to bring the book. Can I return it tomorrow?)

Situation 2:

13 Upmb. 10
Minta maaf Dr/Prof/Madam/Sir/Miss. Aku lupa hantar tugas pada hari yang ditetapkan. Bolehkah aku hantar petang/malam ani.
 (Sorry Dr/Prof/Madam/Sir/Miss. I forgot to submit the assignment on the due date. Can I submit it this afternoon/tonight)
 IS

Situation 1:

14 Itbb. 38
Salam, maaf pak/buk, saya terlupa membawa buku yang saya pinjam minggu lalu. Insyallah esok pagi syaa kembalikan ya.
 (Salam, sorry pak/buk, I forgot to bring the book I borrowed last week. Insyallah I'll return it tomorrow morning, ya)

Situation 2:

15 Unpb. 46

Maaf ms, kemarin saya terlupa untuk menghantar tugas saya. Insyallah saya akan menghantarnya selepas ini.

(Sorry ms, I forgot to submit my assignment yesterday. Insyallah I will submit it shortly)

Based on data 12, 13, 14, and 15, it shows the BDS and IS understanding of the unmet desires of their lecturer, leading them to apologize. Overall, the act of understanding the unmet desires of the interlocutor and apologizing is an example of positive politeness in communication between students and lecturers. Additionally, this action reflects empathy and consideration for the lecturer's feelings. It demonstrates the student's respect and responsibility for the mistakes or negligence committed within the academic environment. The research findings also show Positive Politeness strategies in apologies expressed by BDS and IS using the sub-strategy of taking responsibility for the mistakes they have made. This can be seen through the following data;

Situation 1:

(BDS)

16 Upk. 53

Dr, saya minta maaf. Saya terlupa untuk membawa tersebut. Saya akan membawanya secepat mungkin jika ada masa lapang sebelum Dr. pulang ke rumah, jika tidak saya akan memulangkannya esok dengan meletakannya di pigeon hole Dr.

(Dr, I am sorry, I forgot to bring the book. I will bring it as soon as possible if I have free time before you go home, otherwise, I will return it tomorrow by placing it in your pigeon hole)

Situation 2:

17 Kpk. 36

Maaf Dr, saya terlupa untuk menghantarnya. Insyallah saya akan menghantarnya secepat mungkin.

(Sorry Dr, I forgot to submit it, Insyallah, I will submit it as soon as possible)

Situation 5:

18 Upk. 53

Eh sorry! Astaghfirullahhaladzim. Minta maaf ku banar2 dang/wang inda ku sengaja. Lakastah tani print lagi kau punya assignment kalau ada softcopnya di laptop mu. Kalau nada softcopnya mari aku taipkan semula and then tani buat sama-sama, aku jadi tukang taip kau jadi tukang pastikan info atu luruskah inda

(Oh sorry! Astaghfirullahhaladzim. I am really sorry dang/wang, it was not intentional. Let's print your assignment again if there's a soft copy on your laptop. If there's no soft copy, let me type it again, and then we'll do it together. I'll type, and you can ensure the information is correct)

(IS)

Situation 1:

19 Unpm. 11

Maaf buk, saya terlupa membawa bukunya. Saya akan kembalikan bukunya secepatnya ya

(Sorry buk, I forgot to bring the book, I'll return it as soon as possible, ya)

Situation 2:

20 Unmm. 33

Assalamu'alaikum pak, maaf saya lupa menghantar tugasannya. InsyaAllah saya akan submit secepatnya hari ini pak.

(Assalamu'alaikum pak, sorry I forgot to submit the assignment. **InsyaAllah I will submit it as soon as possible today pak**)

Situation 5:

21

Itbb. 35

Broo, im really sorry, my mistake. You still have the softcopy? **I will print another copy for you yaa, let me clean all of this first.** Sorry again bro.

Based on the extract data above, it can be seen that BDS and IS not only apologize after making a mistake but also take steps to rectify the mistake as a form of responsibility. According to Yusof et al., (2011), to relieve the addressee, the speaker will choose to express their responsibility for the mistake made towards the addressee. If the mistake has a negative impact on the addressee, the speaker can offer a remedy related to the situation. In addition, situation 5 is a scenario where a student accidentally spills a drink on their friend's worksheet. Based on data 18, the respondent offered a solution to the problem. This can be seen in their statement, "*Lakastah tani print lagi kau punya assignment kalau ada softcopunya di laptop mu. Kalau noda softcopunya mari aku taipkan semula and then tani buat sama-sama, aku jadi tukang taip kau jadi tukang pastikan info atu luruskah inda*". The, situation 5 is a scenario where a student accidentally spills a drink on their friend's worksheet. Based on data 21, the respondent offered a solution to the problem. This can be seen in their statement, "*I will print another copy for you yaa, let me clean all of this first*". This shows that a person is not only apologizing but also taking action to rectify or mitigate the negative impact of their mistake. Therefore, the act of taking responsibility after apologizing is an essential aspect of the Positive Politeness strategy, as it shows respect and consideration for the interlocutor.

Table 2. Positive Politeness in Apologies

Sub-Strategies	Realisation
Give Attention	Greetings.
Promises	Promise to submit the assignment.
	Promise to pay compensation.
Provide Reasons	Stating Reasons.
Understanding the unfulfilled desire of the listener	Admitting to not bringing the book.
	Admitting to not submitting the assignment.
Responsible	Returning the book.
	Submitting the assignment.
	Paying compensation

Negative Politeness

In expressing apologies, BDS and IS students use one of the Negative Politeness sub-strategies, which is showing respect to the interlocutor. The sub-strategy of showing respect through the use of academic titles by Bruneian students can be seen identified the following data;

Situation 1:

22 (BDS)
 22 Uppmb. 02
Minta maaf Dr/Miss/Prof, buku yang Dr/Miss/Prof pinjamkan, tertinggal dirumah, in shaa allah esok saya balikkan
 (Sorry Dr/Miss/Prof, the book you lent me was left at home. In shaa allah I will return it tomorrow)

Situation 2:

23 Upt. 14
Dr/puan/ms/sir, boleh saya hantar tugas tersebut esok?
 (Dr/puan/ms/sir, can I submit the assignment tomorrow?)

The extract in situation 1 is an incident between a student and a lecturer, where a student forgot to bring a borrowed book. Situation 2, on the other hand, illustrates a scenario between a student and a lecturer, where a student forgot to submit an assignment. In data 22 and 23 above, examples of the use of the Negative Politeness strategy applied by Bruneian students through the sub-strategy of showing respect by using appropriate tittles to the interlocutor are shown. In this context, students communicate with the lecturers. Therefore, Bruneian students tend to use tittles such as *Dr/Prof/Miss/Sir* when communicating with lecturers as a sign of respect.

Situation 1:

24 (IS)
 24 Uj. 40
Good morning madam, I'm sorry I can't return the book by today as I forgot to bring it. Is it okay for you if I return it by tomorrow?

Situation 2:

25 Unpj. 20
Saya minta maaf buk, saya terlupa menghantar/mengerjakan tugas tersebut. saya berjanji akan memberikan tugas tersebut saya secepatnya
 (I am sorry buk, I forgot to submit/complete the assignment. I promise to submit my assignment as soon as possible)

26 Uis. 31
Minta maaf pak, saya terlupa, saya akan menghantarnya
 (Sorry pak, I forgot, I will submit it)

Based on data 25 and 26, the use of the tittles *Pak/Bu* by Indonesian students towards lecturers is a form of respect and politeness which is common in Indonesian culture. According to Kubro & Wayan, (2023), Indonesian culture encourages its people to be polite and respectful towards elders. The tittle *Pak* refers to the word *Bapak*, used to address older men or those with higher social status, while tittle *Bu* refers to the word *Ibu*, used to address women. According to Gunawan, (2017) Easterners will not address lecturers by their names without preceding them with a tittle. Additionally, the use of the tittles *Pak/Bu* also reflects family values in Indonesian culture, where the relationship between students and lecturers is not only an academic relationship, but also close, resembling a family bond.

This finding is similar to the findings of the research conducted by Husna & Arief, (2020), which suggests that social status can influence politeness in communication. Students who use *Pak/Bu* to address lecturers indicate respect and honor. The use of academic tittles is considered as a polite gesture that shows respect for the interlocutor, especially when communicating with individuals of higher social status or rank. This

action can also help to maintain a positive impression between the communicating parties. It not only reflects good communication etiquette but also strengthens the relationship between students and lecturers. Therefore, the appropriate use of academic titles becomes an essential aspect in maintaining norms of politeness in communication, particularly in academic contexts.

Table 4. Negative Politeness in Apologies

Students	Sub-Strategies	Realisations
BDS	Respectful	The use of academic titles
IS	Respectful	The use of academic titles

Bald-on-record Strategies

Bald-on-record strategy refers to the direct expression of apology, which is one form of politeness strategy in the politeness theory proposed by Brown & Levinson, (1987), which none other than to admit wrong doing or violation of politeness norms and rectifying them. It applies in situations where an individual realizes they have made a mistake, causing a misunderstanding between parties. Therefore, the expression of apology is not just a form of regret but also a step to fix social relationships affected by the action. By apologizing directly, the guilty individual demonstrates readiness to take responsibility for the mistake and endeavors to rectify it.

The first and second situations describe common occurrences between students and lecturers. The first situation is an incident where a student forgets to return a book to the lecturer. Research findings have shown that Bruneian students, as respondents, use a Bald-on-record strategy in expressing their apologies. Based on the first situation, the following are the data collected from BDS and IS:

Situation 1:

(BDS)

27 Upmb. 18
Saya minta maaf Dr, saya terlupa membawa buku yang saya pinjam dar Dr.
 (I am sorry Dr, I forgot to bring the book that I borrowed from you)

28 Upmb. 25
Saya minta maaf Dr, saya berjanji untuk memulangkan buku itu pada hari ini tetapi saya terlupa untuk membawanya
 (I am sorry Dr, I promised to return the book today, but I forgot to bring it)

29 Kpmb. 43
Maaf sangat Dr, saya terlupa membawa buku yang saya pinjam, Insyallah saya balikkan esok pagi
 (I'm very sorry Dr, I forgot to bring the book I borrowed. Insyallah I'll return it tomorrow morning)

(IS)

30 Unpb. 46
Maaf ms, insyallah saya akan kembalikan bukunya esok ya Ms karena saya lupa membawa bukunya tadi.
 (Sorry ms, insyallah I will return the book tomorrow because I forgot to bring it earlier)

Unpj. 16

31 *Assalamualaikum pak atau buk, mohon maaf karena terlupa membawa buku yang saya pinjam dan saya berjanji akan kembalikan secepatnya.*
 (Assalamualaikum pak or buk, **I am sorry** for forgetting to bring the book I borrowed, and I promise to return it as soon as possible)

The data above shows direct apologies from students to lecturers, namely the expressions *minta maaf/maaf*. These utterances are made by students to indicate that they have made a mistake, namely, not bringing back the borrowed book to the lecturer. The student's apologies are then followed by their reasons for being late or forgetting to return the book. According to Maruti, (2016), the most common strategy for apologizing is by providing reasons. The more reasons given, the more sympathy the interlocutor will feel towards the speaker. The reasons referred to here are those that cannot be avoided by the speaker, leading to the mistake being made. Moreover, the second situation is an incident where a student forgot to submit an assignment on the specified date. Based on the second situation, below is the data collected from BDS and IS;

Situation 2:

(BDS)

32 Upmb. 15
Saya minta maaf dr kerana saya terlupa untuk menghantar tugas yang dr berikan. Bolehkah dr beri peluang kepada saya menghantar tugas tersebut sekali lagi?
 (**I am sorry dr** for forgetting to submit the assignment you gave. Could you please give me another chance to submit the assignment?)

Upmb. 27

33 **My sincere apologies to you Dr.** As I have forgotten to submit the work according to the deadline. I would like to request to you Dr. to accept my work as late submission.

(IS)

34 Unpj. 02
Assalamualaikum Ma'am, mohon maaf yang sebesar besarnya Ma'am sebelum nya, saya terlupa mengumpulkan tugas yang telah ditetapkan penanggalan nya. Apakah saya masih bisa untuk mengumpulkan tugas tersebut Ma'am
 (Assalamualaikum Ma'am, **I sincerely apologize** for my oversight. I forgot to submit the assignment with the set deadline. Can I still submit the assignment Ma'am)

The findings of the research have shown that Bruneian students, as respondents, used direct strategy in expressing their apologies in this situation. Based on the second situation, data above shows that both BDS and IS expressed their apologies directly to the lecturer by saying *minta maaf/maaf*. This statement was made by the students to indicate that they had made a mistake by not submitting the assignment on the specified date, followed by reasons for their lateness or forgetting to submit the assignment.

Furthermore, the third situation illustrates a scenario where a student borrowed a friend's car to go somewhere, but the car got scratched due to minor accident during the journey. This situation indicates negligence while using someone else's car, resulting in damage or scratches. In this case, the student needs to take responsibility for the mistake they made. Based on the third situation, below is the data collected from Brunei and Indonesian students;

Situation 3:

(BDS)

35 Upmb. 25
Aku banar2 minta maaf, nda ku sengaja. Inshallah ku tanggung ni pengusaian kereta mu ani.
(I'm truly sorry, it wasn't intentional. Inshallah I'll take responsibility for this damage to your car)

Upmb. 33

36 **Sorry** I accidentally scratched your car, are there any insurance to cover? If no, I will pay for it

(IS)

37 Unpj. 02
Bro, sorry. *Tadi ada kecelakaan sedikit, maaf banget motor nya sedikit rusak. Nanti akan ku ganti untuk uang perbaikannya.*
(Bro, sorry. There was a little accident earlier, really sorry, the motorbike got slightly damaged. I'll pay back for the repair costs later)

Unpj. 16
Aduhhh maaf, tadi pas minjem keretamu ada kemalangan nanti aku gnti ya
(Oh no sorry, there was an accident when I borrowed your car. I'll replace it ya)

The extract in the situation 3 indicate that BDS and IS acknowledge their mistakes and use the on-record strategy in expressing their apologies to their friends. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that BDS and IS directly expressed their apologies towards their friends with a statement, *minta maaf/maaf/sorry*. These utterances are used by the students to indicate that they have made a mistake, specifically damaging the borrowed car. The student's apologies are then followed by statements of how they take responsibility for their mistakes, including offering money as compensation.

Next, the fourth situation is an incident where a group of university students was assigned to write an article. However, one of the students was reprimanded by their group members for not contributing enough. In this case, the student needs to take some action to show responsibility for the mistake made. Based on the fourth situation, below is the data collected from Bruneian and Indonesian students;

Situation 4:

(BDS)

39 Uppmb. 02
Sorry sorry, tinggalkan saja mana-mana part yang belum bebuat untuk ku buat nanti
(Sorry sorry, just leave any parts that haven't been done for me to do later)

Upmb. 33

40 **Sorry** for the lack of update, I've been juggling with a lot of other commitments. Are there any way to specifically divide our task and update the timeline?

(IS)

41 Unpj. 02
Maaf sekali karena aku kurang berkontribusi di kerja kelompok kali ini. Apa mungkin ada yang bisa aku lakuin buat menebus kesalahanku
(I am really sorry for not contributing enough in this group work. Is there anything I can do to make up for my mistake?)

Uis. 13

42 **Maafin saya ya, mungkin sya kurang memberikan kontribusi yg ckup dlm penghasilan artikel kita. Saya berjanji akan berusaha lebih keras lgi**
(Please forgive me, perhaps I didn't contribute enough to our article. I promise to try harder)

The research finding also shows that Bruneian and Indonesian students, as respondents, acknowledge their mistakes and use the on-record strategy to express their apologies to their group mates. Based on data above, it can be concluded that both BDS and IS directly express their apologies, using phrases like, *minta maaf/maaf/sorry*. These expressions are uttered by students to indicate that they have made a mistake, such as not cooperating and contributing to group assignment, followed by stating how they will take responsibility for their actions. This includes self-improvement, cooperation and efforts to write the article effectively.

The fifth situation outlined in the survey illustrates a scenario where a student accidentally spills a drink on their friend's paperwork, which needs to be submitted to the lecturer the following day. In this case, the students need to take responsibility and take appropriate steps to rectify the situation. Based on the fifth situation, below is the data collected from Bruneian and Indonesian students;

Situation 5:

(BDS)

43 Upmb. 10
Minta maaf(sabut nama). Aku printkan/buatkan balik kraja mu. Bagi saja main points nya. Aku siapkan by hari ani.

(Sorry (insert name). I'll reprint/rewrite your assignment. Just give me the main points. I'll have it ready by today)

Upmb. 25

44 **Saya betul-betul minta maaf atas kesilapan yang tidak disengajakan ini, saya akan bertanggungjawab dan memberi tahu hal sebentar kepada pensyarah esok jika kerja ini tidak dapat disiapkan pada hari ini. Sekali lagi saya minta maaf.**
(I'm truly sorry for the unintentional mistake. I will take responsibility and inform the lecturer about the actual situation tomorrow if this assignment cannot be completed today. Once again, I'm sorry)

(IS)

45 Unpj. 02
Maaf bangetttt. Aduh ya ampunn, apa kamu punya soft copynya? Sini biar aku printin lagi
(Really sorry. Oh my, forgive me, do you have the soft copy? Come here I'll print it again for you)

Uis. 13

46 **Maaf saya nggak sengaja numpahin, klo masih ada s/c nya aku printin lgi**
(I'm sorry, I accidentally spilled it, if there's still a soft copy, I'll print it again)

The extract in situation 5 indicate that BDS and IS acknowledge their mistakes and use the on-record strategy in expressing their apologies to their friends. Based on data above, it can be concluded that both BDS and IS directly express their apologies, using phrases like, *minta maaf/maaf/sorry*. These expressions are uttered by students to indicate that they have made a mistake, such as spilling a drink on their friend's paperwork. The student's apology is then followed by stating how they will take responsibility for their actions, which includes offering help to rewrite their friend's assignment and reprinting the paperwork.

DISCUSSION

This study listed five situations that required apologies due to various mistakes made to analyze the linguistic politeness of students when apologizing. These situations occur within the university environment. The situations include forgetting to bring borrowed books, submitting assignments late, scratching a friend's car, not cooperating in a group assignment, and spilling drinks on a friend's paperwork. The research findings indicate that some respondents answered the questions in conversations while others explained in detail how they expressed their apologies. This study also addressed both main questions, namely to observe politeness strategy forms and how Bruneian and Indonesian students used these politeness strategies.

The study found a very significant similarity in politeness strategy compared to differences. This is closely related to cultural and social context factors. The similarity in the use of politeness strategies by BDS and IS when expressing apologies is due to several factors that can influence politeness in both countries. Culture and social values play a major role in shaping the speech acts of Bruneian and Indonesian students, particularly in the context of apologies. According to Yaqin et al., (2022), culture plays a crucial role in influencing an individual's speech acts. This is also supported by Maros, (2007) in his research, explaining that speech acts in a society are usually closely related to the cultural values of society. Both Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia have rich cultures with values of politeness, respect for others, and maintaining harmonious social relationships. Concepts such as helping one another and respect for elders or those of higher social status are essential aspects of both cultures. Therefore, students from both countries tend to show similar attitudes when using politeness strategies when apologizing to their interlocutors.

Furthermore, religion, especially Islam, plays a very significant role in shaping social norms and behaviors in Brunei and Indonesia. Concepts such as forgiveness and willingness to rectify mistakes are among the values highly esteemed in Islam's teachings. According to Maros, (2011), states that Southeast Asian countries share somewhat similar religious and cultural beliefs. In Brunei, a country with a majority Muslim population, Islamic values such as politeness and willingness to apologize are influenced by religious teachings. This also applies in Indonesia, where Islam also plays a significant role in shaping the behavior and speech acts of individuals. Therefore, it is clear that religion influences how BDS and IS express apologies with complete politeness and humility and a commitment to not repeat the same mistake in the future.

Moreover, the education systems in Brunei and Indonesia also indirectly shape students' communication patterns, including in the context of apologizing. Education in both countries emphasizes academic aspects and the importance of shaping good character. Students are given a deep understanding of moral values such as politeness, responsibility, and empathy. These values are essential elements in expressing apologies. The development of social media and technology also influences the use of politeness strategies in expressing apologies. This is in line with what Insani, (2023) stated that when interacting with others on social media, it is important to pay attention to using politeness

strategies in communication. This can also affect the language style and communication methods used by students in Brunei and Indonesia, especially when expressing apologies.

Based on these factors, it can prove that differences and similarities in the use of politeness strategies by BDS and IS when expressing apologies occur due to the influence of culture, religion, social values, education, as well as social media and technology, all of which affect speech acts and politeness attitudes in both countries. By understanding the factors influencing communication patterns and politeness, students will be more effective in communicating and building harmonious relationships among individuals. However, it cannot be denied that there are differences in cultural contexts and social environments, but fundamental values such as respect for the interlocutor, honesty, and responsibility remain the same foundation for BDS and IS when communicating with others.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that students from Brunei and Indonesia use various politeness strategies to express apologies and demonstrate good speech and courteous behavior. These practices reflect long-standing cultural traditions and beliefs in both countries. The study found that students primarily use Positive Politeness strategies, although they also employ Negative Politeness and Bald-on-Record strategies. This indicates that the politeness in apologies is aimed at saving face and is profoundly influenced by the moral values rooted in their respective cultures. The research highlights a significant similarity in politeness strategies between students from both countries, emphasizing how cultural values and norms are ingrained in their social interactions.

The study has important implications for raising cultural awareness in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia. By understanding the similarities and differences in linguistic politeness, people can better navigate social norms, reducing the risk of conflicts from misunderstandings. In the educational context, this study can enhance intercultural understanding among students in both countries, preparing future generations to communicate effectively in a diverse world. The findings on politeness strategies in apologies provide a foundation for developing better communication and stronger cultural cooperation.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research could expand to compare politeness across various ethnicities and cultures within Brunei, Indonesia, and other countries. Examining linguistic politeness differences between genders and across different age groups could further deepen the understanding of how social, cultural, and gender factors influence politeness practices.

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