

**Research Article**

# **The Level of Politeness by Using Personal Pronouns on Academic Environment**

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## **Abstract**

Personal pronouns are a part of language. The use of the speaker's pronouns to interlocutors is called first-person pronouns; The use of interlocutor's pronouns to speakers is called second-person pronouns. Meanwhile, the use of personal pronouns to the object of conversation is called third-person pronouns. This research aimed to disclose the level of politeness by using personal pronouns on academic environment. It was located in the Tourism Department, State Polytechnic of Bali, and the object of the research is people with academic backgrounds who performed conversations by using personal pronouns. The research was descriptive-qualitative methodology and implemented the research techniques, including observation, documentation, literature, and triangulation. The research results reveal that several levels of politeness occur in the use of personal pronouns on campus. This is usually expressed when the speaker pays attention to the person he is talking to and the object of the conversation. Apart from that, the use of personal pronouns pays attention to several things so that there are no deviations in their use. The elements that must be considered include age, social status, and feelings.

**Keywords:** Academic Environment; The Level of Politeness; Personal Pronoun

## **1. Introduction**

Language politeness is a basic requirement between addressers and addressees to achieve good communication so that the message can be delivered in a good situation. The politeness in local cultures has its different levels. The Indonesian tradition has limitations or rules in politeness that are more focused on. Not only are there problems at the conversation level in building up politeness, but pose has also been a primary influence on acquiring the level of politeness, like head, hands, body, and feet attitudes. Endraswara (Endraswara, 2006), described that people with a full understanding of politeness, and their attitudes have Java morality figures, like smooth-talks, euphonious and inoffensive to others. Moreover, politeness is classified into three, such dressing politeness, act politeness, and language

politeness. It focuses on verbal/ oral signs in communication procedures.

Language use in academic settings reflects not only the transmission of scientific information but also the social dynamics, cultural values, and norms of politeness that prevail within the academic community. One significant linguistic aspect in this context is the use of honorific personal pronouns. In academic interactions—both spoken and written—the selection of pronouns such as saya (I), aku (I), kami (we, exclusive), kita (we, inclusive), Anda (you, formal), or even title-based forms like Bapak/Ibu (Mr./Mrs.) reflects an awareness of social relationships, institutional hierarchies, and the ethics of scholarly communication. Brown (Brown, 2015), gave details of politeness as one of the language features to express human sociality attributes

clearly. It has an important role in establishing people's personal, so it could be reflected in their talks. In academic environments, the use of honorific pronouns is often strategic and context-dependent, such as in interactions between lecturers and students, senior and junior researchers, or in formal settings like presentations, scholarly discussions, and academic writing. The appropriate choice of personal pronouns not only demonstrates linguistic competence but also pragmatic sensitivity to the social norms of the academic community. Politeness became predominant while performing any conversations, with the address position as the main point. The students who are involved in communication between lecturers or other students; Likewise, lecturers who communicate with their students, equal colleagues or even people/ lecturers with higher positions would use language with different levels of politeness, especially personal pronouns. However, the phenomenon recently showed how people ignore the rules of personal pronouns in conversation which reflected its politeness. The short conversation between student and lecturer below is one of the examples.

Student : "*Selamat siang sensei, aku mau mengumpulkan tugas.*"

Lecturer : "*Silahkan masukkan ke loker saya.*"

Student : "*Loker sensei yang mana?*"

Lecturer : "*Ujung paling atas di sebelah kiri.*"

Student : "*Baik, terima kasih sensei.*"

Translate:

Student : "Good Afternoon, sir/mam, I would like to submit my assignment"

Lecturer : "Please put it in my locker room"

Student : "Which one of yours, sir/mam?"

Lecturer : "On the top of the left side".

Student : "Fine, thank you very much, sir/mam".

The conversation above was presented by the student and lecturer. Student performed conversation by following politeness aspect. However, when He/She used the first-personal pronouns, the level of politeness became less. Using the second- personal pronoun */sensei/* fulfills the politeness principle due to its entitlement to jobs like teacher/lecturer, doctor, and lawyer. The lecturer as addressee is a professional Japanese lecturer, so the use of the personal pronoun is acceptable. It is the same when the lecturer used the first-personal pronoun */saya/*. According to the KBBI-Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI, 2023), the term */saya/* is the person who speaks or writes (in a formal or normal situation). The lecturer used the personal pronoun */saya/* to express himself/herself to the student. Nevertheless, the student applied */aku/* as the first-personal pronoun while communicating with the lecturer. As stated in the KBBI-Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI, 2023), the term */aku/* is the person who speaks or writes (in a familiar situation). The term */aku/* uttered by the addresser (student) is the use of a personal pronoun with low politeness, due to it being performed to the addressee (lecturer) as older people and has higher social status, as opposed to the addresser (student). The student is supposed to use the term */saya/* to be more polite. Besides, many factors that should be considered before using personal pronouns.

Some previous research in journals regarded as references and comparisons to present this research. First, research by Nurwahyuningsih (Nurwahyuningsih, 2017) entitled "Language Politeness in Learning Indonesian Language". This research was performed in Muhammadiyah 3 Ambulu Vocational School and analyzed students' level of politeness while interacting with teachers by using six politeness principles. Based on the research, it concluded that students in Muhammadiyah 3 Ambulu Vocational

School were unable to apply six politeness principles in learning the Indonesian Language. 80% of students implemented the agreement maxim, while 70% fulfilled the tact maxim and approximately 45% for the generosity maxim, whereas approbation, modesty, and sympathy maxims cannot be applied. Furthermore, some factors influenced impoliteness, such as social distance between speaker and hearer (addresser and addressee), the closer they interact with each other, the lower their level of politeness. The topic, if the speaker/addresser had inappropriate things to the topic, it would be impolite. Someone is considered to be impolite when they are out of context, situation, place, and improper time. Besides, the level of Indonesian Language vocabulary comprehension poorly has been influenced of impoliteness language due to the code mixing of the Indonesian and Java languages.

Ruriana (Ruriana, 2018) overviewed "Personal pronoun and its structures replacement in Bahasa Blambangan". It was chosen as an object due to its inattention to be analyzed in research. Therefore, personal pronouns in the Blambangan language were interesting and important to be presented in the research. The result showed there are 3 (three) personal pronouns in the Blambangan language, namely the first-person pronouns, second-person pronouns, and third-person pronouns. Aside from those, the writer found other structures to be considered as personal pronouns replacements. First-person pronouns are categorized into 2 (two), they are singular and plural.

Next, observed by Ifada (Ifada, 2022) entitled "The Factors of Using the Second Singular Personal Pronoun in Indonesian Language and Japanese". This research emphasized factors that influenced the use of personal pronouns, focusing on the second singular. Not only focuses on one factor but also gender, social status,

situation, age, and level of close relationship in the Indonesian language as comparison to languages that have distinction significantly as seen for similar factors, even though their differences in grammatical. The result showed 5 factors that influenced the second singular personal pronouns, and the distinction factor is its gender in Japanese. It indicated that the second singular acknowledged gender in Japanese, while Indonesian unrecognized it. Clearly, four factors influenced the second singular personal pronouns in Indonesian language, i.e., age, social status, close relationship, and situation.

Badudu (Badudu, 1996) explains that personal pronouns are pronouns used to refer to people. Personal pronouns can be used to refer to oneself, to refer to the person being spoken to, and to refer to the person being talked to. These personal pronouns are known as first-person pronouns, second-person pronouns, and third-person pronouns. The first-person pronouns can be said to be a form used by speakers to refer to themselves which are divided into two parts, namely the first-person singular pronoun and the first-person plural pronoun. In Indonesian, the first-person singular pronouns are divided into several parts according to the level of politeness. Second-person pronouns are pronouns for speech partners as participants. Second-person pronouns also have two types, namely singular and plural second-person pronouns with varying levels of politeness. On the other hand, third-person pronouns are used to talk about the object of speech. Personal pronouns have two parts, namely the third-person singular pronouns and the third-person plural pronouns. In the use of the third-person plural pronouns, it is known as the term /they/ which is also not specifically directed at a group of genders, so its use can be used regardless of gender.

This research has different things to be observed, compared to previous research. It aims to disclose the level of

politeness by using personal pronouns on academic environment regarding the overviews above.

## 2. Methods

This research is located in the Tourism Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Avenue, South Kuta Subdistrict, Badung Regency. The academic environment has seven departments, *i.e.* Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Accounting Department, Business Administration Department, and Tourism Department. The Tourism Department was chosen because of the dialogues in using personal pronouns performed by people in academic backgrounds majority to be object of the research. The data source in this study consists of conversations among academics within an academic setting, in which personal pronouns are used as a form of politeness. The result revealed the dialogues between senior and junior students, student and lecturer, student and senior lecturer, lecturer and lecturer by achieving the level of politeness in using personal pronouns on academic environment.

The data was qualitative, as processing data was collected by deductive-inductive. The qualitative research was the descriptive procedures, characterized in both oral and written from people and their behaviour observed by Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong (Moleong, 2016). This research applied some data collection methods based on Bungin's theory (Bungin, 2011) for instance, (1) Observation, the processing of data that have specific features compared to others. It is distinguished into participant observation and non-participant observation (Sugiyono, 2018). In this case, this was performed in non-participant observation, where the researchers were not to be involved fully, but they took part as independent observers to obtain the data; (2) Documentation, the collecting data by using notes, transcripts, books, newspapers,

magazines, etc. related to research. The document referred to interaction results in the Tourism Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali; (3) Literature review, a research method which used any source of the data (as much as possible) and applied to observe, reduce and disclose comprehensively to individual, groups, organization program or event systematically (Kriyantono in (Silvina & Angguntara, 2018)). This method is performed by collecting data in the literature, such as books, offline and online journals, and informants related to the research question of research; and, (4) Triangulation, combined the data collection and its source which observed. Thus, the writer applied different data collection to achieve the data itself in identical sources. Moreover, the writer implemented the complete participant observation and documentation for the same data source simultaneously.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Interactions between people by using personal pronouns on academic environment are classified into several parts. These are the explanations for the level of politeness:

### 3.1 Lecturer and Lecturer

This interaction involves some addressers and addressees between lecturers. Hinges on its classifying, it discovers that personal pronouns have vital role in compiling polite sentences. Interaction between senior lecturers, senior-junior lecturers, and even junior lecturers. The dialogue results are described as follows:

Datum 1:

L1 : "*Mau pesan Tefa juga pak? Saya mau pesan.*"

L2 : "*Wah, saya juga mau pesan pak. Sekalian yah.*"

L1 : "*Do you want to order at Tefa, sir? I want to order there.*"

L2 : "*Ok, I want to order too, sir. Order for*

me too please.”

The aforementioned conversation is derived from an observational study conducted through direct participant observation and field note documentation of an interaction between two senior lecturers, who employed honorific registers in an informal context within the faculty common room.

Datum 2:

L1 : “Mbok, aku besok izin yo gak ikut ke Hotel. Ada rapat senat.”

L2 : “Oke. Dirimu ikut rapat saja. Aku besok pergi sama Mirah.”

L1 : “Sis, I have a meeting tomorrow, so I can’t go to the hotel with you”

L2 : “Ok. Just go to the meeting. I’ll go with Mirah tomorrow.”

The dialogue above shows the interaction between the addresser (junior lecturer) and addressee (senior lecturer) in an informal situation. The addresser utters the /aku/ pronoun to the addressee who older and higher social status, likewise the addressee does. Hence, the addressee uses the second-personal pronoun /~mu/ to the addresser.

Datum 3:

L1 : “Tahu gak? Tadi aku ketemu bu \*\*\*\* tapi dia gak sapa aku, padahal sudah aku sapa duluan.”

L2 : “Orang itu memang sombong bu, biarin aja. Aku aja sering ketemu beliau dengan muka jutek.”

L1 : “Do you know? I met Mrs.\*\*\*\* and I say hello to her but she didn’t say anything to me”

L2 : “That person is arrogant, ma’am, leave it alone. I often meet him with a dirty face”

From the dialogue above, the interaction of junior lecturers at the canteen. Both addresser and addressee speak the first-personal pronouns, /aku/ in an informal situation. Furthermore, the addresser vocalizes /dia/ term to talk about a person as an object and lecturer. Thus, the addressee speaks /orang itu/ then replaces /beliau/ with the same object.

### 3.2 Lecturer and Student

The interaction below involves between lecturer and student. The result of the dialogue can be seen as follows:

Datum 1:

S : “Maaf sensei, saya belum tesuto”

L : “Memang minggu lalu kamu kemana nduk.”

S : “I’m Sorry Sensei, I did not get a test.”

L : “Where were you last week sweetie?”

From the dialogue above, the addresser (student) uses /saya/ as the first personal pronoun to the addressee (Lecturer) who is older and has higher social status, while the addressee (lecturer) speaks /kamu/ to the addresser (student) as a lower-status person.

Datum 2:

S : “Sensei, kata temanku besok libur yah? Mereka dengar dari bu Made.”

L : “Kamu cek dulu kalender akademik, kan sudah dibagikan.”

S : “Sensei, my friends said tomorrow is a holiday, right? They heard it from Mrs. Made.”

L : “Just check the academic calendar first, it’s been distributed.”

The dialogue reveals that the student (addresser) speaks /~ku/ as first personal-pronoun to older people and higher social status as lecturer (addressee). Then, the student utters /mereka/ to clarify people as objects. However, the lecturer (addressee) utters /kamu/ to the student (addresser).

Datum 3:

S : “Minasan, siapa diantara kalian yang orang Tabanan?”

L : “Saya, sensei. Dyah juga. Tapi hari ini dia izin sensei.”

S : “Minasan, who among you is from Tabanan?”

L : “Me, sensei. Dyah too. But today she asked permission from sensei.”

The dialogue above presents the lecturer as the addresser and the student as the addressee. The lecturer (addresser) says /kalian/ to his/her students in class, while the student (addressee) states /saya/ to



indicate the first-personal pronoun and /*dia*/ to mention his/her classmate as an object who is absent from his/her class.

### 3.3 Student and Student

The interaction in using personal pronouns involves some addressers and addressees as students. The result can be seen as follows:

Datum 1:

S1 : “*Cha, besok aku ke kostmu yah*”

S2 : “*Datang aja, aku gak kemana-mana koq*”

S1 : “*Cha, I’ll come to your boarding house tomorrow, ok*”

S2 : “*Just come, I’m not going anywhere*”

The dialogue illustrates the use of /*aku*/ personal pronoun, both student 1 (addresser) and student 2 (addressee) in an informal situation. Furthermore, student 1 (addresser) utters the second-personal pronoun /~*mu*/ to student 2 as his/her addressee.

Datum 2:

S1 : “*Kalian gak tau chi, sakitnya aku liat mereka berdua mulu*”

S2 : “*Sabar aja. Kamu pasti bisa move on*”

S1 : “*Don’t you know, pals, it hurts me to see them together all the time*”

S2 : “*Calm down. you can definitely move on*”

Still, the dialogue shows interaction in informal situation between students, both as addresser and addressee. Here, the student (addresser) vocalizes /*aku*/, referring to himself/herself and /*mereka*/, pronouncing two people as objects. On the contrary, other student acts as addressee speaks /*kamu*/ to his/her mate as student and addresser.

Datum 3:

S1 : “*Jam berapa selesai yah? Aku ada kegiatan di UKM*”

S2 : “*Kamu minta izin aja sama korti*”

S1 : “*What time will you finish? I have activities at UKM*”

S2 : “*Just ask permission from Korti*”

The interaction above reveals the first-personal pronoun /*aku*/ spoken by student 1 as addresser. Likewise, student 2 as addressee utters /*kamu*/ in responding to the addresser’s statement.

As regards the results above, it can be seen on Datum 1, where senior lecturers perform their interaction. The personal pronouns of /*saya*/ were uttered by two senior lecturers as a way of showing their attitude politely and how they respect each other. Secondly, on Datum 2, the interaction was conducted between the junior (addresser) and senior lecturer (addressees), while the junior lecturer (addresser) spoke /*aku*/ to the senior lecturer (addressees) who is older and of higher social status. It indicated the addresser could not be stated as breaking the rules of personal pronouns, followed by its informal situation and close relationship to the addressee, uttered /*aku*/ term instead of /*saya*/, revealed that /*aku*/ personal pronoun regarded its rule. Thus, the addressee spoke /*aku*/ in responding to the addresser, preserving a close relationship in the sense, like /*mu*/ as a second-personal pronoun. Moreover, Datum 3 illustrated the close relationship between junior lecturers, both addresser and addressee in informal situations by uttering /*aku*/ term. The addresser, vocalized /*dia*/ to clarify a lecturer as an object and stated that she kept to personal pronoun rules because the gender could not be determined to object. In addition, the addressee spoke /*orang itu*/ revealed that she flipped out while referring to a person as an object, but revised it by speaking /*beliau*/ to a similar object. It indicated that sarcastic language occurred in the interaction. As can be observed so far, emotional feeling was involved without concerning the level of politeness.

In Lecturer and Student interaction as Datum 1 disclosed their personal pronouns, regarding its rules. In the class, a formal situation, /*kamu*/ term uttered by the addressee (lecturer) to the addresser as the student could not be noted as disobeying the

rule, due to the addressee being older and having higher social status, rather than the addresser. On Datum 2, the student as addresser pronounced /ku/ to the lecturer (addressee) in an informal situation, but it was stated as incompatible, considering its level of politeness because of the lower social status and age of the addresser (student), compared to the addressee (lecturer). The addresser is supposed to utter /aku/ or /ku/ in conversation. Nevertheless, the people's habitual in speaking /aku/ or /ku/, particularly from Java Island without concerning age and social status, were noted as obeying the personal pronoun rules. In addition, the terms of /mereka/ and /kamu/ presented the rules and their level of politeness, and on Datum 3 so on.

At last, the interaction between students as presented on Datum 1, 2, and 3, the rules and the level of politeness had applied properly. The most personal pronoun utterances, such as /aku/ (first-pronoun), /kamu/ (second singular pronoun), /kalian/ (second plural pronoun), and /mereka/ (third plural pronoun) were dominantly pronounced by the student (addresser) to another student (addressee), or even person as an object (student).

#### 4 Conclusion

In regards to the result of the research above, it concludes the level of politeness in personal pronoun utterances that occurred on academic environment is presented by its rules. The interaction, such as senior lecturers, senior to junior lecturers, junior to senior lecturers, or junior lecturers interaction applies the personal pronouns by concerning its levels of politeness, like ages and social status of their addressees. Likewise, lecturers to their students or student-to-student do. Besides, the emotional sense is involved and

influences the addressers without concerning the ages and social status of their addressees or persons as objects.

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