



## Implementing language politeness to strengthen students' character in elementary schools

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**Abstract.** Politeness in language plays an important role in encouraging social behavior and character development in elementary school students. However, previous research has focused solely on the value of linguistic politeness from a linguistic perspective, without considering its contribution to character education. This research addresses this gap by analyzing how language politeness practices encourage character development in elementary school students and identifying strategies to strengthen character education. This case study research was conducted in three elementary schools in Jepara Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, with a sample of 5th-grade students, class teachers, and school principals. Researchers selected participants using purposive sampling based on their active involvement in language politeness and character education programs. Researchers collected data through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis using observation

sheets, interview guides, and documentation checklists. The researchers analyzed the data using the interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, supported by open coding, thematic analysis, and triangulation to ensure reliability. The findings indicate that politeness in classroom interactions, teacher modeling, and daily communication practices can enhance students' discipline, respect, empathy, responsibility, and social awareness. The results offer a new perspective by showing that linguistic politeness serves as an integrated pedagogical strategy for character education, not just linguistic competence. The findings also offer practical implications for teachers and school leaders in designing classroom practices that foster positive communication and character values.

## Introduction

Education is fundamentally oriented not only toward students' cognitive achievement but also toward the holistic development of character encompassing moral, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Contemporary education emphasizes producing individuals who possess not only strong academic competencies but also positive character values reflected in their daily behavior. Character strengthening has become a crucial component of elementary education because primary school years represent an essential developmental stage in shaping students' identities, mindsets, and social behaviors (Widana et al., 2023). During this period, students are highly receptive to habit formation, value internalization, and environmental influences. Character education systematically

instills values such as responsibility, discipline, honesty, empathy, tolerance, respect, and social awareness through both classroom learning and school culture. According to [Berkowitz \(2022\)](#), character education integrated into learning activities and school environments significantly contributes to positive student behavior, including improved social attitudes, cooperation, and personal responsibility. Furthermore, [Lickona \(2022\)](#) emphasized that effective character education should integrate moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action so that character values are not only understood conceptually but also manifested in students' daily behavior. Research conducted by [Nucci \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that character development among elementary school students can be optimized through a supportive school culture, teacher role modeling, and consistent social habituation.

Similarly, [Silawati et al. \(2024\)](#); [Sudiarta & Widana, 2019](#)) found that character education implementation in elementary schools positively influences students' prosocial behavior, discipline, and interpersonal skills. In the context of twenty-first-century education, [OECD \(2024\)](#) highlighted the importance of developing social-emotional competencies and character as essential elements in preparing young generations to face increasingly complex global challenges. Recent studies by [Suyitno \(2024\)](#); [Parwati & Suastra \(2024\)](#). revealed that character strengthening through school culture and positive communication significantly contributes to the development of students' social behavior. Likewise, [Aprianti et al. \(2024\)](#) reported that character education integrated into classroom learning is more effective in fostering responsibility, empathy, and social awareness than purely theoretical approaches. Therefore, character education should not be viewed as a complementary component of education but rather as a fundamental foundation for developing individuals who are ethical, responsible, and capable of adapting positively to social life.

As formal educational institutions, schools play a strategic role in shaping students' character through interactions within the learning environment. Character formation is achieved not only through explicit instruction but also through habituation, teacher exemplification, school culture, and daily social interactions. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through the Learning Compass 2030 framework, emphasized that twenty-first-century education should focus not only on knowledge acquisition and academic skills but also on the development of communication skills, empathy, collaboration, and responsibility as essential competencies for addressing future global challenges ([OECD, 2024](#)). This perspective highlights the need to implement character education from the elementary school level. Consequently, integrated character-strengthening initiatives should be implemented effectively to ensure that students develop not only intellectually but also morally and socially.

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including how elementary school students communicate. The widespread use of digital devices, internet access, social media, and communication applications has changed the way children interact in their daily lives. While digital technology provides greater access to information and enhances digital literacy, it also presents challenges related to communication ethics and social behavior. [Darling-Hammond et al. \(2022\)](#) argued that digital learning environments and social interactions influence students' social-emotional development, including attitude and behavior formation. Recent studies indicate that intensive digital media use among elementary school students may affect the quality of interpersonal communication, empathy, and social behavior within educational settings ([Aprianti et al., 2024](#)). [Tufte \(2024\)](#); [Marzulina et al. \(2025\)](#) further explained that digital technological development has encouraged more instant and practical communication patterns among younger generations, potentially reducing sensitivity to communication ethics and social politeness.

In elementary education, uncontrolled social media use and insufficient digital literacy may increase the likelihood of impolite communication behaviors, including inappropriate language, reduced respect for others, and declining face-to-face communication skills (Zahrai et al., 2022). Moreover, Herak (2025) found that uncontrolled digital environments may negatively affect students' character development, particularly discipline, responsibility, and social awareness. OECD (2024) emphasized that education in the digital era should focus not only on technological mastery but also on developing social-emotional competencies, communication ethics, and healthy interpersonal relationships. Similarly, Megasari et al. (2025) demonstrated that integrating character education and digital literacy into elementary education can help students develop more respectful, responsible, and adaptive communication behaviors. Therefore, systematic efforts through character education, digital literacy enhancement, and habituating polite communication are necessary to ensure that technological advancement supports positive character formation and ethical social behavior.

Field conditions indicate that communication ethics among elementary school students are becoming increasingly concerning. Preliminary observations conducted in fifth-grade classrooms at SD N 3 Jebol, SD N 2 Singorojo, and SD N 2 Jebol in Jepara Regency showed that several students frequently used informal or impolite expressions when interacting with peers and teachers. During classroom activities, some students interrupted conversations, addressed teachers using inappropriate forms of address, and rarely used courteous expressions such as "please," "sorry," and "thank you." Interviews with teachers further revealed that digital communication habits and social media had contributed to the increasing use of slang, abbreviations, and less respectful communication styles among students. These findings suggest that students have not yet fully internalized respectful communication in their daily behavior and school culture, creating challenges for character education efforts in elementary schools.

These developments have contributed to a shift in communication ethics within school environments, as reflected in students' declining use of polite language. Many students increasingly adopt informal language, popular abbreviations, viral expressions, and communication styles from digital environments without considering context or social norms. In many situations, students communicate less respectfully with teachers and peers, including using inappropriate forms of address, interrupting conversations, neglecting respectful expressions, and showing limited awareness of communication ethics. These conditions suggest that changes in communication behavior extend beyond linguistic aspects and may influence character formation, particularly respect, empathy, responsibility, and social interaction skills. Research has shown that uncontrolled exposure to digital language contributes to declining social sensitivity and communication ethics among elementary school students in face-to-face educational interactions (Ali et al., 2024). Alice et al. (2023); and Rodgers & Nordlinger (2025) also found that intensive social media use is associated with increased use of informal language and reduced awareness of polite language in academic communication.

Excessive use of viral expressions and digital slang may diminish students' understanding of politeness norms and communication etiquette within social environments (Hasjim et al., 2026). According to Nurrahma et al. (2025), low levels of language politeness in schools may reduce students' respect toward teachers, weaken social empathy, and increase individualistic behavior. Furthermore, Reith-Hall & Montgomery (2023); and Solomon & Theiss (2021) argued that digital communication culture may alter the quality of social interactions and reduce interpersonal communication grounded in ethics and mutual respect. Therefore, promoting polite communication through school culture and teacher role modeling has become an increasingly important strategy for strengthening students' character amid the growing influence of digital culture (Herak, 2025).

Language politeness is an essential component of communication because it not only conveys information but also reflects the quality of interpersonal relationships. Polite language use facilitates harmonious interactions, mutual respect, and social balance among individuals. Language politeness refers to language use that adheres to social norms, ethical principles, and cultural values, ensuring effective and respectful communication. It represents not only linguistic competence but also moral values and social awareness. The way individuals speak, choose expressions, and respond to others reflects their character and social sensitivity. Recent studies have demonstrated a close relationship between language politeness and the development of positive social behavior, particularly in fostering respect, empathy, and interpersonal competence among students (Nelissa et al., 2025). Firdaus & Suwendi (2025) reported that polite language use in daily interactions contributes to harmonious social relationships and sustainable character development.

From a pragmatic perspective, language politeness serves as a communication strategy to maintain social harmony and minimize conflict during interactions (Derkach, 2025). Spencer-Oatey (2022) further found that politeness practices significantly influence the quality of interpersonal relationships in educational and multicultural social settings. Likewise, Alhwairiny (2025) demonstrated that integrating language politeness into learning activities enhances students' social awareness, communication ethics, and positive school culture. In the context of character education, polite language use facilitates the internalization of moral values such as tolerance, responsibility, and respect for others.

Suparno et al. (2023) explained that politeness strategies are designed to maintain interpersonal relationships and respect individuals' social dignity during communication. In educational settings, language politeness plays a vital role because schools are social environments where teachers, students, and the broader community interact continuously. The habitual use of polite language can effectively instill character values, including respect, tolerance, empathy, responsibility, cooperation, and social concern. Through these practices, students learn not only appropriate communication skills but also moral and social values that support positive behavioral development.

Although previous studies have examined the relationship between character education and language politeness, several important gaps remain. Most studies focus either on linguistic analyses of politeness forms or on character education in general, without specifically investigating how language politeness is implemented as a practical strategy for strengthening character in elementary school classrooms. In addition, many studies emphasize theoretical discussions rather than examining everyday communication practices among teachers and students in natural school settings. Research on integrating language politeness, classroom interaction, and character development in elementary education in Indonesia remains limited, particularly in schools facing challenges related to the influence of digital communication culture (Noroozi et al., 2024).

This study's novelty lies in investigating language politeness as an integrated character-strengthening strategy embedded in daily classroom interactions, teacher-student communication, and school culture. Unlike previous studies that mainly examined politeness from a linguistic perspective, this research positions language politeness as a practical pedagogical approach for cultivating respect, empathy, responsibility, and social awareness among elementary school students. The study also contributes empirical evidence from multiple elementary schools in Jepara Regency, providing a contextual understanding of how polite communication can be systematically habituated to support character education in the digital era.

Based on these considerations, this study examines how language politeness is implemented in elementary school environments and how it contributes to strengthening students' character. The study addresses the following research questions: (1) How is language politeness practiced in classroom and school interactions? (2) What character values are strengthened through the habituation of polite language? and (3) What factors support or hinder the implementation of language politeness in elementary schools? This study hypothesizes that consistent habituation of polite language in classroom interactions positively contributes to students' character development, particularly in respect, empathy, responsibility, and social awareness. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of language politeness in elementary schools, identify its contribution to character strengthening, and provide practical recommendations for fostering a culture of respectful communication as an integral part of character education in the digital era.

## Method

### *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative case study approach. A qualitative case study was selected because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of how language politeness is implemented in authentic educational settings and how these practices contribute to strengthening students' character. Unlike quantitative approaches that emphasize measurement, a qualitative case study enables researchers to explore participants' experiences, interactions, and meanings within their natural contexts. Because language politeness is closely related to social interaction, school culture, and classroom practices, a case study design was the most appropriate approach to address the research objectives. The study focused on three elementary schools in Jepara Regency that have actively implemented character education programs. These schools represented bounded cases where language politeness practices could be explored comprehensively through multiple sources of evidence, including observations, interviews, and documentation.

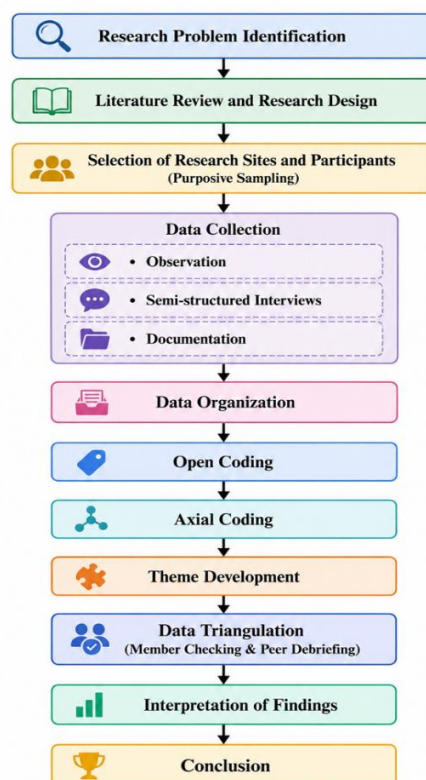


Image 1. Research Flow

Image 1 illustrates the overall research procedure. The study began by identifying the research problem and reviewing relevant literature. Subsequently, participants were selected through purposive sampling. The study collected data through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The researchers organized and analyzed the data through open coding, axial coding, and theme development. Finally, the researchers triangulated the data and conducted member checking before interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions.

### ***Participants and Research Setting***

The study was conducted at SD N 3 Jebol, SD N 2 Singorojo, and SD N 2 Jebol in Jepara Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. Participants included fifth-grade students, classroom teachers, and school principals. Researchers selected participants using purposive sampling based on their involvement in character education and language politeness practices within the school environment.

### ***Data Collection Techniques and Instruments***

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The researcher observed students' communication behavior and language politeness practices during learning activities. Interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and students to obtain in-depth information on implementing language politeness to strengthen character. Documentation included school regulations, character education programs, learning documents, and activity photographs.

**Table 1.** Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments

| Data Collection Technique | Research Instrument               | Data Obtained                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observation               | Observation sheet and field notes | Students' language politeness practices, communication behavior, and classroom interactions                       |
| Semi-structured Interview | Interview guide                   | Information regarding the implementation of language politeness and its role in strengthening students' character |
| Documentation             | Documentation checklist           | School regulations, character education programs, learning documents, and activity photographs                    |

The observation sheet was developed based on indicators of language politeness, including respectful expressions, appropriate speech levels, cooperative interaction, and teacher modeling. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions exploring participants' experiences with implementing language politeness and character development. Documentation checklists identified supporting school documents relevant to the research objectives.

### ***Data Validity and Analysis***

The credibility of the data was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation. The researchers compared information from observations, interviews, and documentation to verify the consistency and accuracy of the findings (Hussein, 2023). Before data collection, two experts in qualitative research and elementary education reviewed the observation sheet and interview guide to ensure content validity. The researchers incorporated the experts' suggestions into the final instrument versions. The researchers established reliability through inter-coder agreement during coding. Two researchers independently coded selected interview transcripts and discussed discrepancies until they reached consensus. The coding framework remained consistent

throughout the analysis. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles et al. (2023), consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Saldaña, 2021). The analysis criteria included identifying recurring patterns related to language politeness behaviors, teacher strategies, students' responses, and indicators of character strengthening (Schlunegger et al., 2024). Codes that appeared consistently across multiple participants and data sources were combined into broader categories before being synthesized into final themes.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2023), consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical process began with open coding, during which meaningful statements related to language politeness and character education were identified. The researchers then grouped similar codes into categories through axial coding, allowing relationships among concepts to emerge. Finally, the researchers conducted selective coding to develop overarching themes explaining how language politeness is implemented to strengthen students' character. Throughout the analysis, the researchers continuously compared data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure consistency among data sources. The researchers reviewed emerging themes repeatedly until data saturation was achieved. Because qualitative research involves researcher interpretation, the researchers maintained reflexivity throughout the study. The researchers continuously reflected on their assumptions, prior experiences, and potential biases during data collection and analysis. The researchers maintained field notes and analytic memos to document reflections and decision-making processes, thereby minimizing subjective interpretation.

The trustworthiness of the findings was established using Lincoln and Guba's criteria. Credibility was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field, and member checking with selected participants. Transferability was enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants. Dependability was strengthened through maintaining an audit trail documenting research procedures and analytical decisions. Confirmability was supported through reflexive journals and peer discussions among the research team to minimize researcher bias.

## Results and Discussion

The findings obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at SD N 3 Jebol, SD N 2 Singorojo, and SD N 2 Jebol in Jepara Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, revealed that language politeness has become an integral part of daily learning activities and school culture. Teachers consistently modeled polite expressions such as “please,” “sorry,” “thank you,” “excuse me,” and “you are welcome” during classroom interactions. Students were regularly encouraged to greet teachers and peers respectfully, ask permission before speaking, and demonstrate appropriate communication etiquette throughout the learning process. These practices were implemented continuously to cultivate students' awareness that polite language use is not merely a communication skill but an essential component of character development.

Evidence from classroom observations, interviews, and school documents consistently supported these findings. During classroom observations, teachers routinely reminded students to use expressions such as please, thank you, and excuse me before asking questions or responding to classmates. One classroom teacher explained, “We do not simply teach polite expressions; we practice them every day so that students gradually make them part of their habits.” Similarly, the school principal stated, “Language politeness has become one of the indicators of character education in our school because respectful communication creates a more positive learning environment.” Students also acknowledged the benefits of these practices. One student

commented, “When we speak politely, our friends are happier to work with us, and the classroom feels more comfortable.” These interview findings were consistent with school documents, including classroom rules, character education programs, and posters promoting respectful communication, indicating that language politeness has been systematically integrated into school culture.

The findings indicated that most students had developed the ability to use polite expressions appropriately during classroom interactions. During group discussions, students frequently employed respectful phrases when expressing opinions, responding to peers, and requesting clarification. Although some students occasionally used informal expressions influenced by social media and digital communication, teachers addressed these situations through persuasive guidance and positive modeling rather than punitive approaches. This strategy appeared effective in helping students understand communication ethics while maintaining a supportive learning environment. The findings support [Tang \(2024\)](#) politeness theory, which emphasizes that polite communication functions to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships and protect the social dignity of communication partners. The consistent use of politeness strategies in classroom interactions shows that language can serve as a practical medium for fostering mutual respect and positive social relationships in educational settings.



**Image 2.** Teacher Explaining the Importance of Language Politeness During Classroom Learning

Image 2 provides visual evidence that language politeness is explicitly incorporated into classroom instruction rather than occurring incidentally. The figure illustrates the teacher's role as a facilitator who continuously models respectful communication during learning activities. This observation supports the interview findings that teachers intentionally integrate language politeness into daily instruction instead of treating it as a separate learning topic.

Another significant finding was the systematic habituation of language politeness through various school routines. The three schools consistently implemented greeting cultures, respectful communication practices, and classroom communication rules as part of their character education programs. Students were encouraged to use polite expressions in both academic and non-academic activities, while visual reminders such as posters and slogans promoting respectful language were displayed throughout the school environment. These findings suggest that language politeness is not an isolated activity but is embedded in the broader school culture. This result is consistent with

Najafov (2025), who reported that habitual polite language use contributes to the development of harmonious social relationships and sustainable character formation. Similarly, Wibowo & Yamtinah (2026); and Xia & Arcodia (2026) found that integrating language politeness into educational activities enhances communication ethics and fosters a more positive school climate.

**Table 2.** Findings on Language Politeness Implementation in Elementary Schools

| Aspect                            | Main Findings                                                                            | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Objectives of Language Politeness | Developing positive communication behavior and creating a harmonious social environment  | 30             |
| Forms of Language Politeness      | Using greetings, polite expressions, respectful language, and appreciation toward others | 25             |
| Teachers' Roles                   | Serving as role models, providing reinforcement, and guiding communication practices     | 30             |
| Impact on Students' Character     | Fostering respect, empathy, responsibility, and a positive learning environment          | 30             |

Table 2 shows that teacher roles and the objectives of language politeness received the greatest emphasis during implementation, indicating that teacher modeling remains the primary mechanism through which students internalize language politeness. Rather than functioning independently, each aspect presented in the table interacts with the others. For example, teacher exemplification and school routines consistently reinforce the use of polite expressions, ultimately contributing to students' character development. Therefore, the table should be interpreted as evidence of an interconnected process rather than isolated findings.

The findings indicate that implementing language politeness plays an important role in fostering students' character development in elementary schools. The habitual use of polite language in both classroom activities and daily interactions encourages students to develop positive character traits, particularly respect, responsibility, and empathy. Students who consistently used polite expressions when communicating with teachers and peers tended to show more courteous behavior and greater awareness of social norms within the school environment. These practices helped students understand the importance of maintaining respectful relationships and interacting appropriately with others.



**Image 3.** Students Performing the Salim Tradition Before Entering the Classroom

Image 3 illustrates the implementation of the salim tradition before students enter the classroom. This practice reflects how language politeness is reinforced through cultural habituation rather than verbal instruction alone. The observation findings, supported by interview data, indicate that routine respectful interactions strengthen students' awareness of respect, courtesy, and responsibility. Classroom observations also revealed that students who regularly practiced language politeness were better able to engage in constructive social interactions. They listened attentively when others were speaking, refrained from interrupting conversations, and showed respect for different viewpoints during discussions and collaborative learning activities. In addition, students became more careful in selecting words and expressions when communicating with others, which helped create a more harmonious and supportive learning atmosphere. These behaviors reflect the development of social skills closely associated with positive character formation.

Interview data from teachers also confirmed that consistent use of polite language positively influenced students' behavior. According to the teachers, students who frequently used respectful language demonstrated stronger cooperation, better self-control, and a greater sense of responsibility for their actions and communication. They were more likely to consider the impact of their words on others and showed greater sensitivity to their peers' feelings. These findings are generally consistent with those of [Annisa et al. \(2024\)](#), who emphasized that character values are internalized through habituation rather than direct instruction. However, unlike Lickonas' conceptual framework, the present study demonstrates that language politeness itself functions as the primary mechanism through which habituation occurs in daily classroom interaction.

**Table 3.** Character Values Developed through Language Politeness

| Character Value | Indicators                                                                                          |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Respect         | Using polite expressions, respecting teachers and peers, and maintaining appropriate communication. |
| Responsibility  | Being accountable for words and actions and following communication norms.                          |
| Empathy         | Understanding others' feelings, showing support, and avoiding offensive language.                   |
| Self-Discipline | Speaking in turn and consistently using polite language.                                            |
| Social Care     | Helping others, respecting differences, and maintaining harmonious relationships.                   |

The findings showed that implementing language politeness contributed substantially to the development of students' empathy. Through consistent use of respectful language in classroom interactions, students gradually became more aware of others' feelings, perspectives, and needs. Practicing polite communication encouraged them to interact more considerately and pay closer attention to how their words and actions affected their peers. As a result, interpersonal relationships among students became more positive and supportive, reflecting stronger empathetic attitudes within the school environment.

During classroom activities, students showed a growing willingness to listen attentively to their peers and engage in discussions with greater sensitivity. Rather than focusing solely on expressing their own opinions, many students made a genuine effort to understand others' viewpoints before responding. This behavior was especially evident during collaborative learning activities, where students actively participated in conversations while respecting their classmates. These interactions suggest that language politeness supports the development of effective communication skills grounded in mutual understanding and respect. Another notable finding was students' ability to express disagreement constructively and respectfully. During group discussions, students generally

avoided using expressions that could potentially offend or discourage others. Instead, they tended to employ courteous language when providing feedback, asking questions, or presenting alternative opinions. This communication pattern created a learning atmosphere in which students felt more comfortable sharing their ideas and participating in academic discussions. Consequently, language politeness functioned not only as a communication strategy but also as an important means of promoting emotional security and social harmony within the classroom.

The findings further suggest that language politeness extends beyond linguistic competence and serves as a mechanism for fostering social-emotional development. Through repeated exposure to respectful communication practices, students learned essential interpersonal skills such as empathy, tolerance, and emotional regulation. These competencies are increasingly recognized as fundamental components of character education because they help students build healthy relationships and navigate social situations effectively. While [OECD \(2024\)](#) emphasizes communication as a key twenty-first-century competency, this study extends that perspective by providing empirical evidence that respectful communication strengthens students' moral and social character through everyday classroom practices. The novelty of the present study lies in demonstrating that language politeness functions not merely as linguistic competence but as an integrated pedagogical strategy embedded in classroom interaction, school culture, and character education practices. Previous studies have generally examined politeness from linguistic or pragmatic perspectives, whereas these findings show how politeness becomes a mechanism through which character values are systematically internalized in everyday educational practice.

The results also corroborate previous research highlighting the positive relationship between communication practices and character development. Students who regularly engaged in polite communication showed higher levels of social awareness and greater sensitivity to others' emotions. Furthermore, they appeared better able to maintain positive interactions and resolve minor conflicts through constructive dialogue. These findings support [Zahrai et al. \(2022\)](#), who emphasized that positive communication practices contribute significantly to the development of empathy, social awareness, and interpersonal competence among students.

Beyond developing empathy and respect, implementing language politeness was also closely associated with cultivating discipline and social responsibility. Students became increasingly accustomed to communication norms such as waiting their turn to speak, requesting permission before interrupting ongoing discussions, and selecting appropriate language for different social contexts. These habits promoted orderly classroom interactions and helped create a learning environment characterized by mutual respect and effective communication. The findings indicate that language politeness acts as a behavioral regulation mechanism that encourages students to become more conscious of their responsibilities during social interactions. From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend Brown and Levinson's politeness theory by demonstrating that politeness in educational settings functions not only to preserve interpersonal harmony but also to facilitate the internalization of character values through repeated social interaction. Likewise, the findings contribute to character education theory by suggesting that communication practices constitute an important pedagogical mechanism through which moral values are transformed into habitual behavior. Thus, language politeness should be viewed as both a communicative competence and a character-building process.

The study further identified several factors that influenced the successful implementation of language politeness in schools. Teacher role modeling emerged as the most significant supporting factor, as teachers consistently demonstrated respectful communication and actively reinforced appropriate language use among students. Many students acknowledged that they often imitated their teachers' communication styles when interacting with peers. In addition, family support and

a positive school culture played crucial roles in sustaining polite language practices. Students accustomed to respectful communication at home generally showed stronger communication ethics and more positive social behavior at school. These findings reinforce the view that character development through language politeness requires collaboration among teachers, families, and the broader school environment. Moreover, the results are in line with [Irsasri et al. \(2024\)](#); [Kaitatzi-Whitlock \(2020\)](#); [Tawakkal \(2025\)](#), who found that consistent polite language practices contribute to the development of responsibility, cooperation, and positive social behavior among students.

Practically, the findings indicate that schools should integrate language politeness into daily learning routines, classroom management, and teacher professional development. Policymakers may also consider incorporating communication ethics into elementary school character education guidelines. Furthermore, schools and families should strengthen collaboration to ensure consistency between communication practices at school and at home. Overall, the findings show that language politeness effectively integrates character education into students' daily experiences. Through continuous practice in classroom interactions and school activities, students gradually internalize positive values that shape their attitudes and behavior. Habitual polite communication not only improves the quality of interpersonal relationships within the school environment but also contributes to the formation of responsible, respectful, and socially aware individuals. Therefore, fostering language politeness should be considered an integral component of character education programs in elementary school.

**Table 4.** Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Language Politeness Implementation

| Supporting Factors                 | Inhibiting Factors                                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher role modeling              | Social media influence                                 |
| Family support                     | Digital technology development                         |
| Habituation of polite language use | Negative peer environment                              |
| Positive school culture            | Lack of supervision                                    |
| Character education activities     | Weak collaboration among school, family, and community |

Although implementing language politeness produced many positive outcomes, the study also identified several challenges that may hinder its effectiveness in strengthening students' character. One of the most prominent challenges was the growing influence of digital communication on students' language behavior. Teachers reported that students were increasingly exposed to various forms of communication commonly used on social media platforms and digital applications. As a result, some students frequently adopted informal expressions, abbreviations, and slang terms that were not always appropriate within formal educational settings. These communication patterns often conflicted with the norms of respectful language that schools sought to cultivate through character education programs. The findings further revealed that the widespread use of social media has shaped students' communication habits in significant ways. Many students tended to carry language styles common in online interactions into face-to-face communication with teachers and peers. While such language may be acceptable in informal digital contexts, using it in school environments sometimes reduced students' awareness of communication etiquette and respectful interaction. This situation shows that the rapid development of digital culture presents new challenges for educators seeking to foster language politeness as part of students' character formation.

Another factor influencing students' communication behavior was the diversity of family backgrounds and parental involvement. The study found noticeable differences in the way students

communicated based on the values and communication practices established at home. Students who regularly experienced respectful communication within their families generally displayed stronger language politeness and better communication ethics at school. In contrast, limited parental supervision and inconsistent reinforcement of polite language practices often contributed to less appropriate communication behaviors. These findings suggest that the success of language politeness programs is closely linked to the support families provide in reinforcing positive communication habits. The results indicate that strengthening character through language politeness cannot rely solely on school-based initiatives. Rather, it requires active collaboration among schools, families, and the broader community to ensure that students receive consistent guidance across different social environments. The influence of digital culture on students' communication behavior observed in this study is consistent with the findings of [Hasibuan et al. \(2026\)](#); and [Lavie Dinur et al. \(2021\)](#), who emphasized that digital environments significantly affect students' communication ethics, social behavior, and character development. Therefore, efforts to strengthen language politeness should involve not only classroom instruction but also family engagement and community support.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in only three elementary schools within one district, limiting the findings' transferability to other educational contexts. Second, the study focused primarily on face-to-face classroom interaction and did not investigate students' communication behavior in digital learning environments. Future research should include more diverse schools, longitudinal designs, and mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language politeness and character development. This study's impact is evident both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it broadens the understanding of language politeness by positioning it as a character education strategy rather than merely a linguistic phenomenon. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based guidance for teachers, school leaders, and educational policymakers in designing school cultures that promote respectful communication and strengthen students' character through everyday interaction.

Overall, the findings confirm that language politeness is an effective strategy for promoting character development among elementary school students. The repeated practice of respectful language through classroom interactions, teacher role modeling, school culture, and communication regulations helps cultivate essential character values, including respect, responsibility, empathy, discipline, and social awareness. These findings extend previous research by demonstrating that language politeness functions not merely as a communication skill but also as a practical instrument for character formation. Consequently, integrating language politeness into everyday educational practices can foster a positive school culture and strengthen character education programs, particularly in an era characterized by the increasing influence of digital communication.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that language politeness is implemented through classroom interactions, teacher modeling, habitual use of courteous expressions, and school communication practices, and that these practices strengthen elementary school students' character by fostering respect, empathy, responsibility, discipline, and social awareness. The findings also indicate that the successful implementation of language politeness depends on consistent collaboration among teachers, families, and the broader school community, while challenges remain due to the influence of digital communication habits and peer interactions. These findings suggest integrating language politeness into character education programs through structured classroom activities, teacher professional

development, and school policies that promote respectful communication as part of everyday learning. Educational policymakers should incorporate language politeness into character education guidelines and teacher training programs to support sustainable implementation across elementary schools. Future research should investigate the long-term impact of language politeness on students' character development, examine its implementation in different educational and cultural contexts, and explore integrating digital citizenship and communication ethics to strengthen character education in the digital era.

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