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The Exemplary Behavior and Habituation of PAI Teachers in Instilling Language Politeness Values in MIS Tuhfatul Athfal Students

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on describing the exemplary practices and habituation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in instilling language politeness among students at MIS Tuhfatul Athfal. The research was conducted from September to October 2026 using a descriptive qualitative approach. A total of five people were involved as informants, including the head of the madrasah, PAI teachers, class teachers, and two sixth-grade students. Research data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Subsequently, the data were analyzed based on the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model with the support of NVivo software. The research results reveal that the teacher's exemplary behavior is evident in their polite communication, maintaining intonation when speaking, respecting students' opinions, and delivering reprimands without belittling. Meanwhile, habituation is implemented through guidance to get used to greetings and salutations, asking for permission, using kind words, and reminding friends when impolite speech arises. Teachers also provide advice and guide students to understand the feelings of others due to the words they say. The practice takes place in an environment influenced by family habits, peer interactions, and exposure to digital media. These findings indicate that instilling language politeness requires more than just reprimanding students' behavior. Exemplary behavior in daily communication needs to be accompanied by continuous habituation so that politeness can grow as part of the students' language behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language becomes an important means for students to express thoughts, feelings, and attitudes in daily life. In the educational environment, language proficiency is not only related to the delivery of messages but also reflects how a person respects others. Politeness in language can be seen from word choice, intonation, and the appropriateness of speech to the communication situation. Cahyono et al. (2024) explain that linguistic politeness is an important part of developing communication skills in elementary school children. Muharudin et al. (2022) also show that the practice of politeness needs to be understood by considering the form of speech and its social context. This emphasizes that good communication not only requires the ability to convey intentions but also the awareness to maintain feelings and respect for the interlocutor. Students' language practices at school still show differences in the application of politeness. Mocking friends, giving unwanted nicknames, speaking in a loud tone, interrupting conversations, and using inappropriate word choices are some behaviors that need attention. Liani & Dafit, (2023) found that the politeness levels of elementary school students' language vary, ranging from polite to less polite, and are related to both internal and external factors. Wulansari et al., (2021) also revealed that the learning and social environment also shape students' language behavior. Family, school, and peers become environments that provide communication experiences for children. Through a systematic review of 16 articles, Siki et al. (2024) demonstrate the importance of family and school environments in the formation of

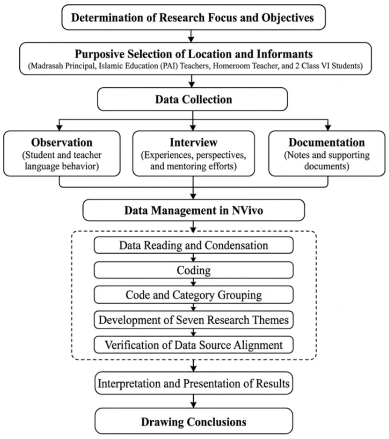
linguistic politeness. In addition, the development of digital media has another influence on students' speaking habits. Kaharuddin et al., (2024) found the use of popular expressions from social media in student communication, while Hidayah (2024) examined the relationship between TikTok usage and the development of language politeness in elementary school children. These various conditions indicate that the formation of language habits occurs through many environments, thus their cultivation requires attention from the school. Teachers play an important role in shaping students' communication behavior because their actions and words can serve as examples that are observed and imitated. Exemplary behavior can be manifested through ways of greeting, using words when giving directions, listening to students' opinions, and correcting inappropriate behavior without belittling. Bandura (1977) through social learning theory explains that individuals can learn behavior by observing models in their surroundings. The process includes attention, information retention, behavior reproduction, and motivation.

Thus, instilling politeness is not enough through explanations of language rules, but it needs to be accompanied by examples that students can see in daily interactions. Musyawir and Julkarnain (2023) also highlight the importance of teachers' language politeness in character building for children. This exemplary behavior needs to be reinforced through habituation, such as guiding students to greet, say hello, use expressions like please, sorry, excuse me, and thank you, as well as listening when others speak. Haudoka et al. (2021), Liani & Dafit (2023), and Izza et al. (2025) also discuss habituation, modeling, behavior reinforcement, and educational environment support as part of efforts to cultivate students' language politeness. The cultivation of linguistic politeness is closely related to the values of Islamic education. QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:70 commands the believers to speak the truth (qaulan sadīdan), while QS. Al-Isra' [17]:53 directs humans to convey the best words. The value of exemplary behavior is also emphasized in QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:21, which explains that the Prophet Muhammad is a good example for the believers. This teaching is in line with the hadith narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim, which encourages Muslims to speak well or remain silent. This foundation shows that politeness in language is not merely etiquette in social interactions, but rather a part of the moral responsibility and character building of a Muslim. Previous research has examined students' language politeness through various focuses. Liani & Dafit (2023) discuss the forms of speech, influencing factors, and efforts to improve the politeness of elementary school students. Kaharuddin et al., (2024) highlight the relationship between language habits and the development of technology and social media, while Siki et al., (2024) examine the roles of family and school through a systematic review. Izza et al., (2025) focus on the efforts of teachers in instilling language politeness in lower-grade students, while Ahmad (2022) examines the development of polite character through the role of Islamic Cultural History teachers in Madrasah Aliyah. Various studies have provided an understanding of the factors that shape politeness and strategies for its cultivation. Nevertheless, further studies are still needed to specifically elaborate on how the exemplary behavior and habituation of PAI teachers are applied in daily interactions at madrasah ibtidaiyah. Aspects that need to be considered include not only the strategies conveyed by the teacher but also the examples of communication demonstrated, the habits built together with the students, and the teacher's response when faced with impolite speech. Based on that, the novelty of this research lies in the analysis of the relationship between the exemplary practices and habituation of PAI teachers, students' language behavior, environmental factors influencing it, and the responses of teachers and the madrasah in addressing the use of impolite language. This focus places politeness in language as an educational process that occurs through real interactions, not merely the delivery of rules or understanding of polite behavior. Initial observations at MIS Tuhfatul Athfal indicate that students' language behavior still requires reinforcement. Some forms of speech that are a concern include the habit of mocking, giving nicknames to friends, and speaking in a loud tone. On the other hand, students have also shown positive communication behaviors, such as greeting, saluting teachers, and

asking for permission in certain situations. These conditions illustrate that the practice of politeness has been found in the school environment, but it has not been consistently applied in various communication situations. Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the exemplary behavior and habituation of Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling the value of polite language among students at MIS Tuhfatul Athfal. The discussion focuses on the forms of students' language behavior, the factors influencing these habits, as well as the practices of exemplary behavior, habituation, and the teacher's response in fostering polite communication. This research is expected to provide an understanding of the process of instilling language politeness in the educational environment of madrasah ibtidaiyah.

2. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the exemplary behavior and habituation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in instilling language politeness among students. This approach was chosen to understand behavior and social interactions in natural situations (Fadli, 2021). The research was conducted at MIS Tuhfatul Athfal, Kuala Dua Village, Sungai Raya District, Kubu Raya Regency, in September–October 2026. The informants were purposively selected, consisting of five individuals: the head of the madrasa, the PAI teacher, the homeroom teacher, and two sixth-grade students. The selection considered the involvement and knowledge of the informants regarding the cultivation of language politeness from the perspectives of the madrasa management, teachers, and students. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were directed at students' language behavior as well as the exemplary conduct and responses of teachers to impolite speech. Interviews explore the informants' understanding, students' communication habits, influencing factors, and the efforts made in the madrasah. Interview information is recorded in writing, while documentation is used to complement the research data. Data analysis refers to the model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data processing is assisted by NVivo through the stages of document entry, reading and coding relevant sections, grouping codes into categories (nodes), and developing and examining themes based on data sources. NVivo is used to help organize and trace data patterns, while the determination of categories and interpretation of results are still carried out by the researcher.



The validity of the data is examined through re-reading the notes, checking the consistency of codes with the information sources, and tracing the process of category and theme formation. Differences in statements between informants are also taken into account in the interpretation. This research does not use triangulation as a specific procedure; the examination is conducted through the review and verification of research records and documents.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview of Data Analysis Results

The results of the data analysis show seven main themes related to students' language politeness and the efforts of PAI teachers in instilling it at MIS Tuhfatul Athfal. The themes include the concept of language politeness, students' language practices, situational context, socio-emotional impact, factors influencing language habits, teacher and madrasa responses, and habituation strategies. The seven themes were developed through coding five data sources, namely the head of the madrasa (I-01), PAI teacher (I-02), class teacher (I-03), and two sixth-grade students (I-04 and I-05). The composition of these informants provides an overview from the perspective of madrasah administrators, educators, and students regarding communication practices that take place in the madrasah environment.



Figure 1. Project Map of Data Source Relationships and Research Themes

The Project Map in Figure 1 shows the relationship between the five data sources and the themes resulting from the coding. Findings regarding language politeness, therefore, are not only based on the views of educators and madrasah heads but also take into account students' experiences in interactions. The differing positions of the informants help the researcher understand the issue of politeness from both the perspective of the guidance provided by the madrasah and the communication practices experienced by the students on a daily basis. The distribution of the coding results is displayed in the Hierarchy Chart in Figure 2. The theme of factors influencing language habits received 24 references, followed by situational context with 23 references and students' language practices with 22 references. Next, the concept of language politeness received 20 references, teacher and school responses as well as habituation strategies each received 19 references, while social-emotional impact received 17 references. This distribution shows that the informants' discussions are closely related to the factors underlying language habits and the situations in which interactions occur. This means that language politeness needs to be understood by considering the environment and social experiences of the students, not merely the choice of words used.

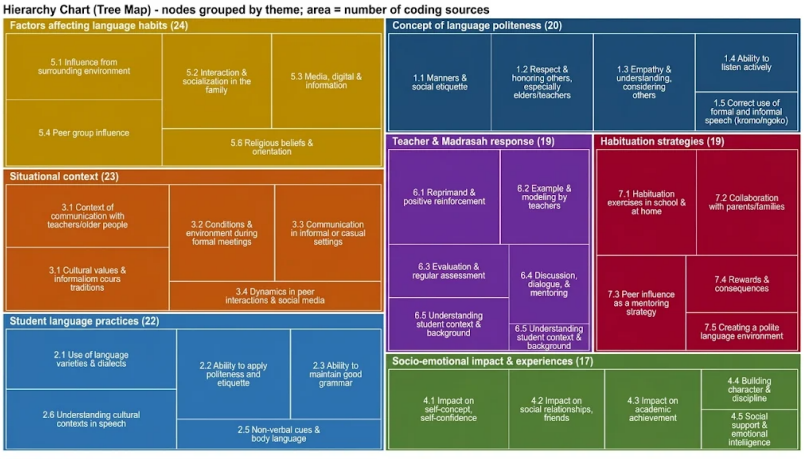


Figure 2. Hierarchy Chart of Research Theme and Subtheme Grouping

A more detailed depiction of the theme structure is presented through a Sunburst Chart in Figure 3. The inner circle represents the main theme, while the outer sections show the sub-themes beneath

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it. This visualization shows the scope of the research discussion, ranging from student communication practices and the factors influencing them to responses and coaching strategies in the madrasah. The arrangement emphasizes that instilling language politeness involves several interconnected aspects.

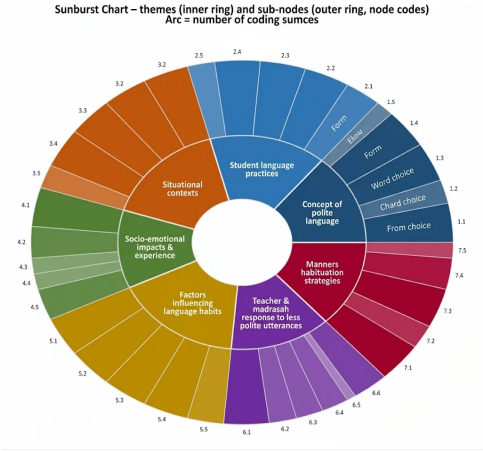


Figure 3. Sunburst Chart of Theme and Subtheme Structure from Coding Results

The three visualizations provide an initial overview of the data structure and the direction of the research discussion. The results of the coding are then interpreted by considering the informants' descriptions and the observations of student interactions. NVivo helps researchers organize data, perform coding, and trace the relationships between themes. However, the software does not replace the role of researchers in understanding the context and providing meaning to the findings (Zamawe, 2015).

3.2 Forms of Politeness and Language Practices of Students

The communication practices of MIS Tuhfatul Athfal students show the use of polite language as well as less polite speech. Politeness is evident through the habit of greeting, asking for permission, asking questions properly, and using expressions like please, sorry, and thank you. One of the students explained, "When talking to the teacher, I usually speak more politely, such as greeting them, asking for permission if I want to leave the classroom, and asking questions if there are lessons I don't understand" (I-04). The statement indicates that the students have recognized forms of politeness in communication, especially when interacting with teachers. A similar observation was made by the head of the madrasa and the PAI teacher, who noted that some students have started to get used to greeting, asking for permission, and using expressions that show respect for others. On the other hand, impolite speech is still found in student interactions. The forms include mockery, giving disliked nicknames, using harsh words, speaking in a loud tone, and interrupting conversations. The PAI teacher revealed that "there are also students who sometimes still use impolite language, especially when joking with their friends" (I-02). The homeroom teacher also explained that students' communication tends to be more free when they are outside the classroom, especially during breaks or playtime. The researchers' observations found the use of words such as "anjing," "anjay," "babi," "bodoh," and "tolol" in certain interactions. The mockery is sometimes accompanied by mentioning the names of parents or comments that insult a friend's physical appearance. The pattern of term usage in the interview data is also displayed through a Word Cloud in Figure 4. Words like talking, friends, teacher, polite, joking, and mocking stand out in that visualization. The appearance of these words shows that the informants' discussions about politeness are largely related to the interactions between students and their friends and teachers. However, the Word Cloud only depicts the occurrence of terms in the data, so its interpretation still needs to be linked to the context of the informants' statements.

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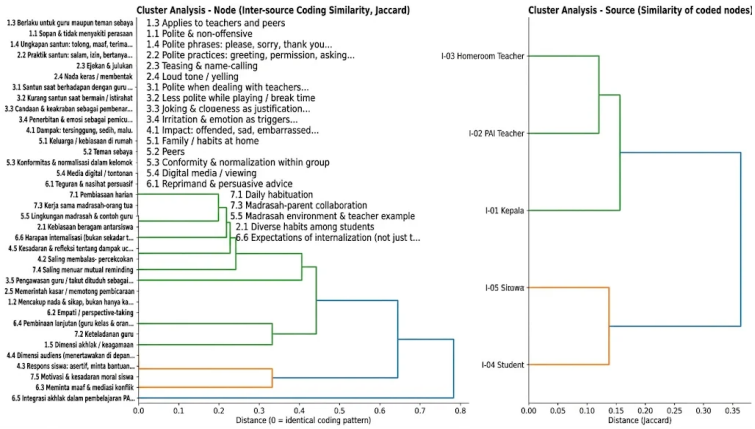


Figure 4. Word Cloud of the Top 70 Words from Interview Data Processing

The findings show that politeness is not only determined by the speaker's intention but also by word choice and its impact on the interlocutor. Utterances considered as jokes can cause discomfort if they contain mockery or belittlement of others. A student explained that when joking around, there are friends who speak too loudly or mock others. Some friends responded by laughing, while others felt displeased (I-04). This difference in responses shows that the speaker needs to consider the feelings of others before delivering their words. This principle is in line with QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 53, which commands humans to convey better words to avoid causing disputes. This teaching emphasizes that maintaining speech is part of the responsibility in social relationships. The research findings are also in line with Cahyono et al., (2024) who emphasize the importance of word choice and communication style in building politeness among elementary school students. Musyawir and Julkarnain (2023) also demonstrate the connection between teachers' language politeness and the character formation of children. Thus, linguistic politeness is not only manifested through the use of polite expressions but also through the attitude of respecting others in various communication situations.

3.3 Factors Influencing Students' Language Habits

The coding results show that the factor influencing language habits received 24 references, the highest number among other themes. Research data shows that these habits are related to several environments close to students' lives, namely family, peers, social groups, digital media, and madrasahs. These five factors are interconnected in shaping the way students speak and interact. Language habits at home can carry over to the school environment. The way parents speak and give advice becomes one of the experiences that children are familiar with from an early age. A similar influence can also be seen in peer interactions. Teasing and nickname-giving, for example, are sometimes considered jokes because they are commonly used within the group. Siki et al., (2024) highlight the role of family and school environments in the formation of linguistic politeness, while Susandi et al., (2024) found instances of derogatory speech toward peers and the use of harsh tones in interactions among elementary school students. Other sources of language habits come from viewing and digital media. Expressions that students often hear can reappear when they talk with friends. Hidayah and Minsih (2024) discuss the relationship between TikTok usage and the development of language politeness among elementary school students. However, the data from this research has not yet shown any specific platform or content that serves as the main source of impolite speech. This condition can be understood through Bandura's social learning theory (1977). Someone can learn behavior by observing and imitating the actions of people around them. Students also have the opportunity to imitate the way of speaking they encounter at home, in their social circles, or at school. Therefore, the presence of teachers as role models in communication becomes important. Istiqomah et al., (2024) also show that politeness needs to be present in various forms of

communication during the learning process. Various findings indicate that the formation of polite language habits cannot be solely entrusted to the madrasah. Family and social environment also contribute to the communication behavior of students. Nevertheless, PAI teachers still have an important role in providing good language examples and building positive habits through daily interactions.

3.4 The Exemplary Role of PAI Teachers in Instilling Language Politeness

The behavior of teachers in communication serves as an example that can be emulated by students. The head of the madrasah (I-01) emphasized that teachers need to maintain their speech, respect students' opinions, and deliver reprimands properly. The PAI teacher (I-02) reminded, "Let's not tell the children to speak politely, but then we speak to them in a rude manner." This shows that instilling politeness needs to start from the teacher's own behavior. The application of exemplary behavior is evident when the teacher responds to a student who mocks their friend. The teacher reprimanded without humiliating, while also encouraging students to understand the feelings of others. The homeroom teacher (I-03) also explained the reason why certain words should not be spoken. The practice aligns with Bandura's social learning theory (1977), which states that behavior can be formed through observation and imitation. The exemplary behavior of teachers also plays a role in the formation of Islamic character (Khairat et al., 2026: Tarsono et al., 2025). The statement from student I-05 indicates that politeness has not yet fully become a habit. He admitted that he is more careful when speaking in front of a teacher because he is afraid of being reprimanded. This finding shows that some students are still influenced by supervision in maintaining their speech. The exemplary behavior of teachers based on the concept of uswah hasanah, as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 21, needs to be applied consistently. School culture support can also help students cultivate polite behavior in their daily interactions (Cahyono et al., 2024; Fikri et al., 2024; Izza et al., 2025).

3.5 Habituation as a Strategy for Instilling a Culture of Polite Language

The theme of habituating polite language received 19 coding references. These findings include the use of polite language in daily life, the habit of reminding each other, family support, and the cultivation of student awareness. This means that politeness needs to be practiced through repeated interactions, not just conveyed as advice. The practice of habituation is evident through the use of greetings, salutations, requests for permission, expressions of gratitude, and apologies. These expressions need to be accompanied by an understanding of how to appreciate others so that they do not become mere routines. Afifah et al., (2023) explain that the 5S culture is built through routine activities, spontaneous activities, environmental conditioning, and teacher role modeling. Lativah et al., (2025) also emphasize the need for consistent habituation in both learning and social interactions at school. The social interactions of students and the family environment also play a role in shaping language habits. Students need to be guided to remind each other when teasing or nicknames that can hurt friends arise, without responding with similar words. Parental support is also needed to ensure that the habit of using polite language is maintained outside of the madrasah. This is in line with Siki et al., (2024) which shows that family and school play a role in shaping students' language politeness. The process is related to Bandura's social learning theory (1977). The behavior observed from the teacher needs to be given the opportunity to be practiced and repeated in daily life. Positive reinforcement can help students maintain that behavior. Thus, habituation becomes a continuation of exemplary behavior, while also providing space for students to apply politeness in social interactions.

3.6 Teacher and Madrasah Response to Disrespectful Speech

The coding results recorded 19 references on the theme of teacher and madrasa responses to impolite speech. The responses include persuasive reprimands, fostering empathy, conflict mediation, further guidance, and strengthening moral values in PAI lessons. The PAI teacher (I-02) explained that students are invited to imagine their friend's feelings when they become the target of mockery. The homeroom teacher (I-03) also emphasized the importance of explaining the reasons why certain words should not be spoken. This approach is in line with Izza et al. (2025), who emphasize the role of teachers in reinforcing politeness through educational interactions. Disputes arising from impolite speech are handled by bringing the involved students together, listening to each other's explanations, and guiding them to acknowledge their mistakes and apologize. That step teaches responsibility for words while also helping to mend friendships. Khairat et al. (2025) place empathy and justice as important parts of character formation by teachers. These findings are also related to Bandura's social learning theory (1977): reprimands help students recognize behaviors that need to be corrected, while appreciation for polite speech can encourage the repetition of such behavior. The guidance is in line with QS. Taha [20]: 44 about qaulan layyinan (gentle words) and QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 70 about qaulan sadīdan (truthful words). These two principles indicate that teachers need to combine gentleness and firmness when addressing impolite behavior. The goal is not merely to make students afraid of being reprimanded, but to foster an awareness of being responsible for their words and to be more careful when communicating.

3.7 Social-Emotional Impact and the Process of Language Cultural Transformation

The theme of social-emotional impact received 17 coding references. These findings indicate that teasing and name-calling can make students feel offended, sad, or ashamed, and can even provoke retaliatory actions leading to fights. Some students try to deal with the situation by expressing objections, seeking help from teachers, or mediating conflicts. This experience shows that politeness in language is closely related to feelings and relationships among students. Cahyono et al., (2024) also emphasize the importance of politeness in building children's communication skills. Experiencing hurtful words can help students understand the impact of their speech on others. Politeness does not mean remaining silent when treated poorly, but being able to express objections without belittling others. This principle is in line with QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 53, which commands humans to speak in a better manner. Through social learning theory, Bandura (1977) explains that individuals learn behavior through observation and the consequences of actions. However, negative experiences do not automatically change behavior; students still need guidance and opportunities to mend relationships. The transformation of a polite language culture is a gradual process that involves the exemplary behavior of teachers, habituation, guidance, and students' experiences in social interactions. Change is not only seen from the reduction of harsh words but also from the growing awareness to respect others. The influence of family, peers, and digital media necessitates continuous guidance, both in madrasahs and outside the school environment.

3.8 Interconnection Between Sources in Nvivo Analysis

Cluster Analysis–Source shows similarities in coding patterns between I-03 (class advisor), I-02 (Islamic Education teacher), and I-01 (head of the madrasa). Meanwhile, I-04 and I-05 as student informants form their own group. This result shows the difference in data patterns between the group of educators and the students.

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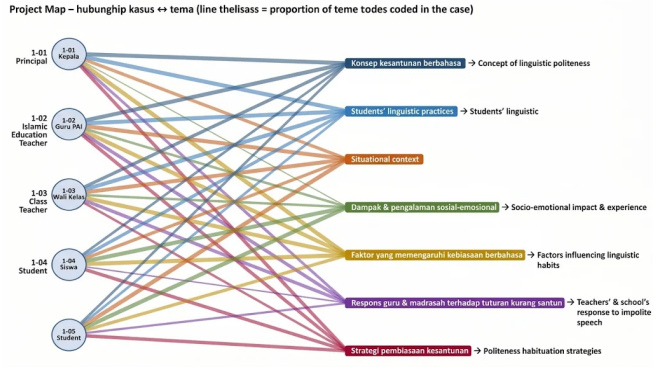


Figure 5. Cluster Analysis of Coding Pattern Similarity Between Nodes and Sources

The grouping reflects the closeness of coding patterns, not the similarity of views among informants. Group differences may be related to their positions and experiences in the madrasah. Therefore, the cluster results need to be understood together with the content of the interviews and observations. NVivo helps organize the data, while the interpretation is still carried out by the researcher (Zamawe, 2015). The overall research findings indicate that students' language habits are influenced by their family environment, peers, and madrasah. The PAI teacher plays a role through exemplary behavior and habituation in line with Bandura's social learning theory (1977), which states that behavior is learned through observation and practice. The formation of a culture of polite language thus requires continuous guidance and support from the student environment.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the exemplary behavior and habituation of PAI teachers play a role in instilling language politeness in the students of MIS Tuhfatul Athfal. The main finding lies in the connection between the two strategies: exemplary behavior provides a model for language use, while habituation gives students the opportunity to apply it in daily interactions. However, the students' politeness has not yet been fully formed because it is still influenced by family habits, peers, and digital media. These findings show that Islamic character education is not enough to be conveyed through advice, but needs to be realized in repeated behavior and interactions. Practically, PAI teachers need to consistently use polite language, provide wise admonitions, and guide students to understand the impact of their words on others. The madrasah can strengthen these efforts through a culture of polite communication and cooperation with parents. With a supportive environment, the moral values in Islamic teachings are expected not only to be understood by students but also to be reflected in their communication habits, both at the madrasah and outside of school.

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