

**AN ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGY IN  
“THE LAND OF FIVE TOWERS” NOVEL BY AHMAD FUADI  
TRANSLATED BY ANGIE KILBANE**

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**Abstract**

*When having conversations, people as members of social group employ strategy in order to be polite and accepted in a community. They need to obey rules which refer to what to say and what not to say while talking to others. This politeness principle can also be seen through the dialogues in a novel where characters in a story are using the politeness strategy. The aims of this study are to identify types of politeness strategy and to explain the factors influencing the choice of the strategies in “The Land of Five Towers”, a novel written by Ahmad Fuadi. All the utterances expressed by the characters show politeness phenomenon in authentic human life. The theories from Brown and Levinson (1978) are chosen to analyze the data and qualitative method is adopted to describe the study. As the result, the types of politeness strategy found in the dialogues of that novel are respectively bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. The factors that influence the choice of the strategies are payoffs and relevance circumstances.*

*Keywords: Character, Politeness Strategy, Qualitative method*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Communication plays a vital role in human life. People communicate with others to convey messages, to understand their feelings, to solve problems and many more. However, when these people are doing communication, they need to be polite in order to maintain proper etiquette.

Leech (2014:12) states politeness is a form of communicative behaviors found very generally in human languages and among human cultures; indeed, it has been claimed as a universal phenomenon of human society. Mostly languages build their own politeness rule. This relates to the social and culture values of the community. Wardhaugh & Fuller (2006:277) state that people from Java, before speaking to the others, must decide on an appropriate speech style: Krama Inggil (high style), Krama Madya (middle style), and Ngoko (low style). The Javanese really consider politeness as a must in daily communication, for the example, the equivalent to the English word now is *samenika* in Krama Inggil, *saniki* in Krama Madya, and *saiki* in Ngoko. The highest style is used among aristocrats. To speak to an elder, a younger person is supposed to show politeness by using high level style. Therefore, we can say that the use of politeness strategy by the Javanese is affected with factor of social distance.

Brown & Levinson (1987:91) explain that politeness is developed in order to save the hearer's face. Face is something that emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended in interaction. People strive to maintain the face they have created in social situation. People have an awareness of self-image when they communicate. This is the emotional and social sense that everyone has to recognize. When people interact with others, many of normal actions potentially face threatening acts (FTAs). People can threaten others' face by look, an expression non-verbal communication. Hence, in order to prevent violation on the hearer's face, a speaker needs to use politeness strategy in interacting.

There are four types of politeness strategy that sum up politeness behavior: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record (Brown & Levinson 1987:92). When a speaker feels thirsty, he/ she will say “*Is it ok for me to have a drink?*” This strategy shows that the speaker recognizes the hearer has a face to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly. Therefore, we can say that carrying out politeness strategies when talking is a must.

The significance of politeness strategies in communication occurs not only in the real society but also in the forms of literary works such as novels and drama. *The Land of Five Towers* novel is a translation novel from *Negeri 5 Menara* written by Ahmad Fuadi and translated by Angie Kilbane. *The Land of Five Towers* novel tells about the existences of Alif, Baso, Atang, Raja, Sulmajid, and Said who live in Madani Pesantren. Most characters frequently used politeness strategy in their utterances, whether they are bald on record, off record, positive or negative politeness. All the utterances expressed by the characters show not only politeness phenomenon in authentic human but also the factors chosen of the strategies.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### a. The politeness strategy and their types

Politeness strategy is used to minimize or avoid the face threatening acts that a speaker makes. According to Brown & Levinson (1987 : 68-69), there are four types of politeness strategy. Those are bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off record.

Bald on record strategy is the strategy does nothing to minimize threats to hearer’s face or no effort to minimize threats to the hearers’ face. Bald on record consists of two strategies. Those are case of non-minimization of the face threat and cases of FTA-oriented bald-on-record usage, for the example, “*I want a drink*”.

Positive politeness strategy is the strategy shows speaker recognizes that the hearer has a desire to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and expresses group reciprocity. The positive politeness is divided into fifteen strategies. Those are notice, attend to hearer (his interest, wants, needs, goods); exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer); intensify interest to hearer; use in-group identity markers; seek agreement; avoid disagreement; presuppose/ raise/ assert common ground; joke; assert or presuppose speaker’s knowledge of and concern to hearer’s wants; offer, promise; be optimistic; include both speaker and hearer in the activity; give or ask for reason; assume or assert reciprocity, and give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation), for the example, “*Is it ok for me to have a drink?*”

Negative politeness strategy is similar with positive politeness. It recognizes the hearers’ face too and you are in some way imposing on them. Negative politeness consists of ten strategies. Those are be conventionally indirect, question, hedge; be pessimistic, minimize the imposition; give deference; apologize; impersonalize speaker and hearer; state the FTA as a general rule; nominalize; and go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting hearer for the example, “*I don’t want to bother you, but would it be possible for me to have a drink?*”

Off record strategy is strategy which takes some of the pressure off. The speaker is trying not to directly impose by asking for something. A communicative act is done off record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. Off record consists of fifteen strategies, namely give hints; give association clues; presuppose; understate; overstate; use tautologies; use contradictions; be ironic; use metaphors; use rhetorical questions; be ambiguous; be vague; over-generalize; displace hearer; and be incomplete, use ellipsis, for the example, “*It is so hot, it makes you really thirsty*”.

### b. Factors Influencing the Choice of Strategies

The employment of politeness strategy is influenced by several factors. According to Brown and Levinson (1987:71) there are two factors that influence the speaker to employ politeness strategy; payoff and relevant circumstances.

The first factor is payoff in which the speaker employs the politeness strategy because he or she can get any advantages. The speaker can minimize the FTA by assuring the hearer that he or she likes the hearer and wants to fulfill the hearer’s wants. Thus, the hearer positive

face is not threatened by the speaker because it can be seen for their mutual shares, for example *Let's get on for dinner*. The example shows that the speaker minimizes the FTA (request) to the hearer by including the speaker himself equally as the participant.

The second factor is relevant circumstances. The seriousness of an FTA is also influenced by the circumstances, sociological variables, and thus to a determination of the level of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987:74) there are three dimensions to determine the level of politeness. Among them are relative power (P), social distance (D) and size of imposition (R).

Relative Power (P) is the general point in which we tend to use a greater degree of politeness with people who have some power or authority over us than to those who do not. It is based on the asymmetric relation between the speaker and the hearer. These types of power are most found in obviously hierarchical settings, such as courts, the military, workplace. You would probably be more polite to your employer than your brother since she or he always arrives late. This is because your employer can influence your career in a positive way (reward power) or negative way (coercive way).

Social Distance (D) can be seen as the composite of psychologically real factors (status, age, sex, degree of intimacy, etc) which together determine the overall degree of respectfulness within a given speech situation. It is based on the symmetric relation between the speaker and the hearer, for example, if you feel close to someone or you know him well because he is similar in terms of age or sex, then you will get closer to him and the distance rating will get smaller. As a result you will not employ polite utterance when you ask him to do something. On the contrary, you will employ polite utterance when you interact with person whom you have not known well, such as person who is older than you.

Size of Imposition (R) can be seen from the relative status between one-speech act to another in a context. If you need to borrow a car in the ordinary time, for example, it will make us feel reluctant, but in urgent situations it will be natural. Thus, in the first context we will employ polite utterance. Meanwhile, in the second context it is not necessary to employ polite utterance because the situation is urgent.

### 3. METHOD

Descriptive qualitative is used to analyze the data taken from dialogues of the novel. The data are identified and categorized as the types of politeness strategy. The descriptive explanation of factors influencing the choice of the strategies is stated to give more understanding about the phenomenon that happen in a human life.

### 4. FINDING AND ANALYSIS

It is found that there are nine data of bald on record, twenty three data of positive politeness, four data of negative politeness, and one data of off record. Two factors influencing the choice of politeness strategy are payoffs and relevance circumstances. Below are a few findings and the analysis.

**Table of Politeness Strategy found in *The Land of Five Towers* novel**

No.	Dialogue	Type of Politeness Strategy	Factor Influence
1.	<i>"Come on, faster," exclaimed Said who was at the front. (page 60, line 20)</i>	<b>On record</b>	<b>Payoffs</b>
2.	<i>"I know where we can gather without being bothered and it's close to the mosque. Come on!" said Said, waking away quickly, forcing us to follow. (page 87 line 5)</i>	<b>On Record</b>	<b>Payoffs</b>
3.	<i>"Come on Lif, let's hurry up and raid the</i>	<b>On Record</b>	<b>Payoffs</b>

	<i>kitchen. Today's menu has a side of rendang!" Said proclaimed while holding his plastic plate and glass up high. (page 112 line 11)</i>		
4.	<i>"Intadzir. Wait. I forget where I put my food coupons," I answered, rummaging through my cabinet. (page 112 line 21)</i>	<b>On Record</b>	<b>Payoffs</b>
5.	<i>"Come on, guys. When else can ride bikes together to the town? I will treat you all the most delicious satay restaurant there, Said coaxed.(page 115 line 7)</i>	<b>On Record</b>	<b>Payoffs</b>

Bald on record is used when the speaker wants to do the face threatening acts with maximum efficiency more than satisfy face from hearer. There are nine dialogues which consist of bald on record strategy in *The Land of Five Towers* novel. This strategy is employed if the speaker and hearer know that maximum efficiency is important, no face redress is necessary. In cases of great urgency or desperation, redress would decrease the communicated urgency. Speaker provides metaphorical urgency for emphasis.

**Data no.1:**

*"Come on, faster," exclaimed Said who was at the front.(page 60 line 20)*

In this situation, Said is the speaker and his friends, Alif, Raja,Dulmajid, Atang, and Baso are the hearers. Said provides metaphorical urgency for emphasis to his friends. He gives the instruction to his friends very clearly. Verb *"come on"* is used with adjective faster. Said exclaims to his friends to come faster to the mosque or otherwise they will be late and they will get punishment. Therefore, the factor influencing the speaker to use this strategy is payoffs. Said minimizes the face threatening act to his friends by including Said equally as the participant to come faster.

Positive politeness is employed to satisfy the positive face of the hearer by approving him as a friend. For the same reason, positive politeness techniques are usable not only for FTA redress, but also, in general, as kind of social accelerator, where speaker, in using them indicates that he wants to come closer to hearer. It is found that there are twenty two dialogues which belong to positive politeness strategy. As mentioned in previous page that positive strategy consists of fifteen strategies. Below are a few examples of the use of the strategies in the dialogues.

**Strategy 1: notice attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods).**

Taken from data no. 10:

*"Yes, that's right! You guys have good memories. Because of that, I'm going to treat you to watch the movie, The Terminator," he said with shinning eyes. (page 213 line 16)*

From the sentences above we can see that Said is the speaker and his friends are the hearers. Said takes notice of aspect of hearer's condition. Said will give something that can attract his friends' attention when they go around to Surabaya.

**Strategy 3: intensity interest to H**

Other way for speaker to communicate to hearer that he shares some of what he wants is to intensify the interest of his own (S's) contribute to the conversation, by 'making good story'.

Taken from data no. 11:

*"Those are the famous Arabic dictionary and encyclopedia, called Munjid. Later, in the third year, we may study it," Raja whispered to me proudly. (page 56 line 24)*

Raja is the speaker and Alif is the hearer. In this situation Raja wants to intensify his favorite books, Arabic dictionary and encyclopedia to Alif. Raja really loves Arabic dictionary and

encyclopedia. Said informs Alif about the books that they will learn later. The factor that influences the speaker use this strategy is relevant circumstances (relative power) in which Raja has more knowledge other than his friends.

**Strategy 4: use in-group identity markers**

By using any of the innumerable ways to convey in-group membership, speaker can implicitly claim the common ground with H that is carried by that definition of the group.

Taken from data no. 13:

*“Relax, buddy. I just need a few minutes to feel the aura of this idol of mine. Anyway, later on holiday, I will watch you Arnold!” Said shouted.* (page 121 line 11)

In above sentences, Said is the speaker and his friends are the hearers. Said uses the word *buddy* as group identity markers to his friends. Buddy means friends. It shows the closeness relationship between Said and his friends. In addition, the factor that influences the speaker to use this strategy is relevant circumstances (size of imposition). In this situation, when Said finds the poster of his favorite actor, he acts like a normal people, but for others people who see Said will think that he is weird since he talks to the poster.

**Strategy 5: seek agreement**

Another characteristic way of claiming common ground with hearer is to seek way in which it is possible to agree with him.

Taken from data no.16

*“To be safe and relaxed, why don’t we just gather at the mosque?”* (page 86 line 19)

Baso is the speaker and his friends are the hearers. Baso tries to make his friends keep clam because Baso suggests about the place that they can use to gather before Magrib prayer. Baso is looking for agreement from his friends. The factor that influences the speaker to use this strategy is payoffs since Baso minimizes the face threatening act to his friends by including Said equally as the participant to go to the mosque.

**5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the result of this study, it is found that the characters use bald on record when the speaker wants to do the face threatening acts with maximum efficiency more than satisfy face from hearer. The result shows that the characters employ positive politeness to satisfy the hearer’s. The characters use negative politeness togives redress to hearer’s negative face by explicitlyexpressing doubt that theconditions for the appropriateness of speaker’s speechact obtain. The characters also employ off record, an indirect politeness strategy in which the speaker says something that can be interpreted in more than one way. There are two factors that influence the politeness strategy; payoffs and relevance circumstances. The payoffs takes place when the speaker minimizes the face threatening acts to the hearer by including the speaker himself equally as the participants, while the relevance circumstances is caused by the relative power, social distance, and size of imposition between the speaker and the hearer.

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