

## POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN THE “ENGLISH FOR NUSANTARA”: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** One of the essential components of communication is using politeness strategies to maintain interpersonal relationships and make them effective and efficient. Thus, inserting elements of politeness into the dialogue within textbooks can facilitate students' understanding of the application of polite language so that they can use it later as a reference to practice in everyday communication. Therefore, this study aims to figure out politeness strategies in the dialogues of the "English for Nusantara" textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school. By employing a content analysis, the researchers found out that there are three out of four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). There are 8 data on bald on record, 65 data on positive politeness, and 6 data for negative politeness. Meanwhile, off-record was not found in the dialogues of the textbook. The researchers figured out that almost all dialogue is displayed as a comic so that students or readers can understand the context and appropriate expressions when communicating in English. Further, the dialogues are among people with close relationships, such as between peers, family, or teacher-students, which did not present various communication. Therefore, the researchers suggest that future book authors of English textbooks can add dialogues between strangers so that the dialogues do not seem monotonous and the exploration of English communication can be broader. The authors can also continue combining the politeness dialogues with socio-cultural elements appropriate to Indonesian culture.

*Keywords:* Communication, Dialogues, ELT Textbook, Politeness Strategies

### INTRODUCTION

Politeness is one of the crucial elements in establishing good relations with others in social life. It is also a way of communicating by expressing a good attitude and respecting others. This aligns with the viewpoint of Zamzani et al., (2013) that an action to express good ethics is called politeness. Several politeness strategies in communicating must be considered to establish good interpersonal relations. Brown and Levinson (1987) have proposed four strategies in politeness: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. These politeness strategies also aim to make communication as effective as possible by paying attention to several things, such as who we talk to, in what situations we communicate to people, and where we talk about things. Further, students must be polite when communicating with teachers, parents, or others.

In learning English as a Foreign Language, teachers must teach how to assemble the vocabulary into good or polite sentences to support students' communication skills. Appropriate teaching media is needed in this learning process to achieve the desired goals. Teachers use many learning media to teach subject matter and its aspects; one of them is textbooks. Textbooks are believed to be one of the critical factors in learning a second or foreign language; textbooks play a crucial role in learning a language. Textbooks can be used as media to teach politeness when communicating with students. There are many aspects that students learn; one of them is the value of politeness, which lies in the dialogue texts in textbooks. Inserting politeness into dialogue texts

can facilitate students' understanding of the application of polite language so that later, they can use it as a reference to practice in everyday life.

Numerous studies in the area of politeness strategies have been carried out. Ibnu and Mujiyanto (2018) did research comparing two senior high school English books, and the result revealed that those two books used all types of strategies, but the bald record strategy was the least used of strategies. Meiratnasari, Wijayanto, & Suparno (2019) analyzed politeness strategies in Indonesian English textbooks called "Talk Active 1" and "Talk Active 2: Language and Culture Programme". The analysis revealed that those two books contained all types of politeness strategies. It also showed how both positive and negative strategies are widely reflected in the books. Nuha (2020) analyzed the dialogue texts in the English textbook "EOS English on Sky 1," and the findings revealed that there are two politeness strategies (positive and negative) in dialogue texts. Still, the politeness strategy presented most often is the positive one. Betaineh et al. (2023) analyzed negative politeness strategies in the Jordanian EFL textbook dialogues. The study's findings revealed that this textbook included more negative politeness in grades 5 and 6 than in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10. Research by Sugiharti et al. (2022) on politeness strategies in Javanese female characters in the Indonesian novel with English translation found that negative politeness was the most used compared to bald on record, positive politeness, and the combination of positive-negative politeness. Erlinda et al. (2023) have studied English for Nusantara textbook with an Emancipated curriculum, but only the positive politeness. The result was that eight types of positive politeness were found and used in the dialogue of the text of this book.

Based on previous research, the researchers found different results regarding the representation of politeness strategies in the textbooks. Not every book applies all four politeness strategies Brown and Levinson (1987) outlined. It is evident from previous studies that positive politeness is the most widely used politeness method compared to bald on-record, negative, and off-record. The researchers also found that previous studies had not examined the four politeness strategies in ELT textbooks with the Emancipated curriculum, which is the newest curriculum used in Indonesia. Therefore, the researchers aimed to analyze whether the English for Nusantara textbook for the seventh-grade junior high school that used the Emancipated curriculum represented politeness strategies in the dialogue texts of this textbook. This research investigated the practical application of spoken and nonverbal language in practice. The researchers further aimed to examine politeness strategies in the dialogues of the "English for Nusantara" textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school. Considering that this book was published in 2022, deeper research is needed to be used as evaluation material for future writers.

## **METHOD**

This study used content analysis to find out the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) employed in the dialogue of the textbook. This method was chosen since the data went through descriptive analysis, and the findings were given as a written explanation supported by the information in the table. The researchers analyzed the dialogues in the ELT textbook called "English for Nusantara" used by seventh-grade students in junior high schools across Indonesia. The textbook contains various materials, including dialogues, texts, and pictures. However, the researchers focused only on analyzing the dialogues in the textbook.

To collect the data, the researchers employed document analysis. In qualitative research, document analysis is a valuable method for generating data by employing systematic procedures to observe and evaluate printed or electronic documents (Bowen, 2009). This entails thoroughly examining the written content, specifically focusing on dialogues within the textbook, to recognize and classify various uses of politeness strategies. According to Denscombe (2010), this study utilized six procedures of content analysis, which are as follows: (1) collect the texts or images; (2) break the text into smaller components; (3) expand relevant categories; (4) code the components with the categories; (5) count the data frequency; and (6) analyze the text.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed four politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987) (bald on record, positive, negative, and off Record) in the ELT textbook entitled “English for Nusantara” for the seventh grade of junior high school that uses an Emancipated curriculum. The research findings of this study are displayed in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Politeness Strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) in the English for Nusantara Textbook for the Seventh Grade of Junior High School**

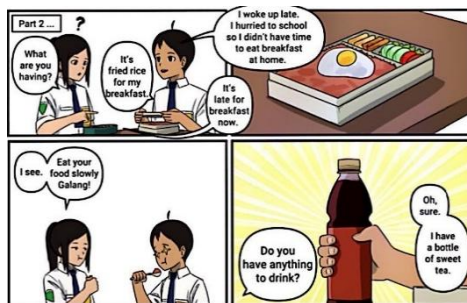
No	Types of Politeness Strategies	Numbers
1.	Bald on Record	8
2.	Positive Politeness	65
3.	Negative Politeness	6
4.	Off Record	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>79</b>

Table 1 shows that the total data found in the English for Nusantara textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school contained the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) 79. It was discovered that there are 8 data for bald on record, 65 for positive politeness, 6 for negative politeness, and not for off record in the textbook dialogues. The bald on record categories found in the English for Nusantara textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school are cases of nonminimization of the face threat and FTA-oriented bald on record usage. Positive politeness categories found are notice, exaggerating, using in-group identity markers, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, raising common ground, offering and promising, including both speaker and hearer in the activity, and giving gifts to the hearer. In negative politeness, the only category found is using questions and hedges.

### ***Bald on Record***

The researchers found six utterances categorized as bald on record strategies, especially cases of nonminimization of the face threat category.

**Figure 1: Sample 1 of Dialogue with Bald on Record Strategies**



Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that Monita and Galang are pretty close friends (informal). They are having lunch together in the canteen during break time. Monita, with a flat expression, commands Galang, "Eat your food slowly, Galang!" Monita employs a bald on record in cases of nonminimization of the face threat category because she instructs Galang directly without softening language. It constitutes a Face Threatening Act (FTA) because she directly gives Galang instructions on how to behave, which could hurt his feelings. Monita feels comfortable enough in her relationship with Galang to be able to use commands directly. This directness suggests a close relationship, so the command is accepted, most likely due to Monita's concern for Galang's comfort and not an intention to impose control.

The second category of bald-on-record strategy is cases of FTA-oriented bald-on-record strategy.

**Figure 2: Sample 2 of Dialogue with Bald on Record Strategies**



The context of the conversation in Figure 2 above is that Andre meets Galang in the middle of the road when Galang is about to go fishing. They are school friends with a close relationship. They talk about their hobbies until Galang ends the conversation with a farewell. Galang's farewell, "Well, I've got to go now," exemplifies a bald-on-record strategy, especially in FTA-oriented record strategy cases. It is characterized by its directness and clarity without softening the impact of his departure. This approach reflects the comfortable nature of his relationship with Andre, where formality is less necessary. While the straightforward statement is direct, it poses minimal threat to Andre's face, as it is a common and expected parting phrase among friends. Galang is portrayed as confident and straightforward, valuing honesty in communication and reinforcing their friendliness and mutual understanding through this casual interaction.

### Positive Politeness

The researchers found that 10 utterances belonged to positive politeness.

Figure 3: Sample 1 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies



The context of Figure 3 is that Galang encounters Andre in the classroom hallway on the first day of school. In this situation, they don't know each other yet. Galang initiates interaction by saying, **“Hi. Are you enjoying the first day of school?”** Galang also uses nonverbal cues by waving his hand to show his friendliness and to set a positive tone. This interaction contains a Face Threatening Act (FTA) because Galang’s question requires Andre to share his feelings about his experiences at a new school, which can be sensitive. Galang uses a positive politeness strategy by showing interest in Andre’s experiences, which can increase his positive face. Galang’s greeting as a speaker demonstrates friendliness, which is intended to build rapport with Andre.

In addition, the researchers found that 13 utterances belonged to positive politeness, especially in the exaggerating category.

Figure 4: Sample 2 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies



The context shown in Figure 4 is that Galang and Andre are new friends at school. They try to get to know each other by talking about their hobbies. In this interaction, Andre responds to Galang's explanation about wanting to go fishing by saying, **“That sounds fun.”** This positively acknowledges Galang's hobby. The Face Threatening Act (FTA) is mitigated by Andre's enthusiastic tone and sparkling eyes, indicating his genuine interest. By affirming that it sounds enjoyable, he employs positive politeness strategies, especially exaggerating categories, that enhance Galang's positive face and encourage further conversation. This exchange portrays Andre

as supportive and engaged, reflecting a peer relationship built on mutual respect and a desire to connect over shared interests.

The researchers found only one utterance that contained group identity markers of positive politeness strategy.

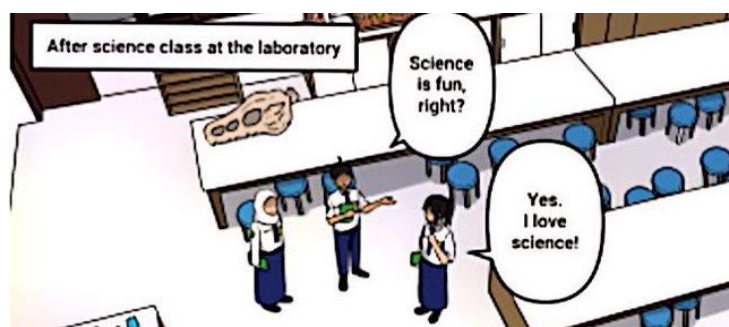
**Figure 5: Sample 3 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies**



The context of Figure 5 is that Monita's dad cooked a special lunch to celebrate her mother's success in getting a promotion at work, and then Monita and her sister congratulate their mom. Monita's mom expresses her gratitude for her children's congratulations by using the term of endearment, "**Dear,**" which reflects their close relationship and her love for them. This affectionate language minimizes the Face Threatening Act (FTA) and enhances the positive atmosphere. By addressing her children with "Dear," she employs positive politeness, reinforcing their bond and making them feel valued. This interaction portrays Monita's mom as loving and nurturing, emphasizing the importance of emotional support within their family.

The researchers found two utterances belonged to positive politeness, especially the seeking agreement category.

**Figure 6: Sample 4 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies**



The context in Figure 6 is that Monita, Galang, and Pipit are talking after science class in the laboratory. They are classmates. When Galang says, "**Science is fun, right?**" he seeks his friends' agreement with his opinion. It functions as a Face Threatening Act (FTA), requiring Monita and Pipit to validate his sentiment. By using "**right?**" he employs positive politeness strategies. To soften this, Galang uses positive politeness strategies by framing it as a question, inviting agreement, and strengthening social bonds. His approach exemplifies a model person in social interactions, promoting an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels valued and encouraged to participate.



The researchers found only one utterance belonged to the avoiding disagreement category of positive politeness.

**Figure 7: Sample 5 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies**



In the context of datum Figure 7, Andre meets Galang, who is going fishing. They are close friends, so they talk a little. Andre says fishing sounds interesting, so Galang invites him to come along. Andre politely declines Galang's fishing invitation in this interaction by saying, "**Well, maybe next time.**" This response shows respect for Galang's offer while avoiding a direct refusal. Andre's positive politeness softens the Face Threatening Act (FTA), indicating openness to future invitations. Andre is portrayed as considerate and respectful, demonstrating effective communication that prioritizes their friendship and mutual respect.

The researcher found six utterances belonged to positive politeness, especially raising the common ground category.

**Figure 8: Sample 6 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies**



As we can see in figure 8, Galang greets Andre on their first day of school. They didn't know each other before so they asked each other personal things because they wanted to be friends. Galang shares his age while scratching his head, which serves as a Face Threatening Act (FTA) by revealing personal information. He employs positive politeness strategies through this informal gesture, creating a relaxed atmosphere for bonding. Andre responds positively by stating he is the same age and smiling while placing his hand on his chest, indicating happiness about their shared connection. This exchange portrays Galang as approachable and friendly, while Andre shows enthusiasm and openness, reflecting a peer relationship focused on building friendship in their new environment.

The researchers found two utterances belonged to the offering and promising category of positive politeness.

Figure 9: Sample 7 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies



The context of Figure 9 is that Andre meets Galang, who is going fishing. They are close friends, so they talk a little. Andre says fishing sounds interesting. Galang responds to Andre's interest in fishing by joyfully asking, "**Do you want to join me?**" with sparkling eyes. The Face Threatening Act (FTA) is minimal as Galang frames his invitation as a question, allowing Andre to choose without pressure. Galang employs positive politeness by showing enthusiasm and respect for Andre's autonomy. Galang is portrayed as considerate and inviting, reflecting his desire to include Andre in his hobby while maintaining a friendly atmosphere. This exchange reinforces their peer relationship built on mutual respect.

The researchers found 12 utterances of positive politeness, mainly including both speaker and hearer in the activity category.

Figure 10: Sample 8 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies

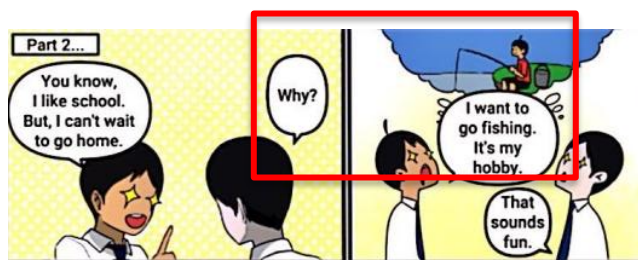




From figure 10, we can see that Galang and Andre are new friends at school. They try to get to know each other by discussing their hobbies, and both like playing mobile games. Andre suggests to Galang, "Maybe we can play together," which serves as a Face Threatening Act (FTA) by inviting Galang to engage in a shared activity. He uses the pronoun "we" to include both, employing positive politeness strategies that foster camaraderie and enhance Galang's positive face. This invitation reflects Andre as inclusive and friendly, demonstrating a desire to strengthen their relationship through their common interest in mobile gaming. The exchange highlights a peer relationship built on mutual respect and shared activities.

The researchers found four utterances in the category of giving or asking for a reason: positive politeness.

**Figure 11: Sample 9 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies**



The context of the datum shown in Figure 11 is that Galang and Andre are new friends at school. They try to get to know each other by talking about their hobbies. Galang gives Andre a reason why he can't wait to go home. He wants to go fishing, which serves as a Face Threatening Act (FTA) because he shares a hobby. He uses positive politeness strategies by visualizing his fishing experience with sparkling eyes, inviting further engagement. This expression of enthusiasm indicates his desire to connect with Andre. Andre, in turn, shows curiosity and willingness to engage by asking about Galang's excitement, reflecting a peer relationship built on mutual interest and respect as they deepen their friendship.

The researchers found 14 utterances belonged to the give gifts to the hearer of positive politeness.

**Figure 12: Sample 10 of Dialog with Positive Politeness Strategies**



In figure 12, Andre meets Galang in the middle of the road when Galang is about to go fishing. They are school friends with a close relationship. They talk about their hobbies until Galang ends the conversation with a farewell. Andre responds to Galang's farewell by smiling and waving, saying, "Sure. Enjoy your fishing, Galang!" This shows that Andre cares about Galang's hobby enjoyment, reflecting their friendship. The Face Threatening Act (FTA) is minimal, as Andre's supportive statement encourages Galang rather than imposing negativity. Andre employs positive politeness by expressing enthusiasm and encouragement, portraying himself as friendly and considerate. This interaction emphasizes their strong bond, characterized by mutual respect and support.

### *Negative Politeness*

The researchers found that six utterances belonged to the negative politeness strategy, especially using questions and hedges.

**Figure 13: Sample 1 of Dialog with Negative Politeness Strategies**



The context of Figure 13 is that Galang and Andre are new friends at school. They try to get to know each other by talking about their hobbies. Galang responds to Andre's invitation to play mobile games by saying, "Sure!" This shows his agreement. He then asks, "Can I come to your house?" while smiling, demonstrating respect by politely seeking permission. The Face Threatening Act (FTA) arises from his request to visit, but he mitigates it with positive politeness strategies, such as his smiling expression and polite language. This approach emphasizes mutual respect and enhances their connection. Galang is portrayed as considerate and friendly, reinforcing their peer relationship through open communication and shared interests.

The finding of this study is the same as the results of research by Erlinda et al., (2023) regarding the analysis of positive politeness in the same book; the results show that the dialogue texts of this textbook contain positive politeness strategies. Bald on record is often used after positive politeness in the English for Nusantara textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school dialogues. Similar to research by Ibnu and Mujiyanto (2018), bald on record is the second most frequently used strategy and appears frequently in dialogues that require an immediate response. Generally, in the dialogues of this textbook, bald on record is used in informal situations (such as with friends or family). For example, during an online class, Ibu Ayu said, "**Students, turn off your microphone.**" when some students are making noise during online classes. Teachers can command students directly with a bald-on-record strategy because teachers have the power in the classroom to control students. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that speakers can carry out face-threatening actions toward listeners because speakers have more power in specific contexts.

Positive politeness has been shown in the findings that it is the most frequently used politeness strategy in expressions. In dialogue texts, this strategy is used in informal situations aimed at close people (friends, family, or someone they know well). The most frequently used category is the exaggerating interest, approval, sympathy, or admiration. Chen (2017) explained that using a positive politeness strategy by showing interest to the hearer is by the friendly character of Indonesian society. Brown and Levinson (1987) revealed that female teachers use more variations of positive politeness strategies in the classroom, such as seeking approval and sharing similarities or interests. However, this research proves that not only females tend to use positive politeness, but males also now actively use positive politeness to seek approval and share similarities and interests. Moreover, in this book's dialogues, the characters' relationships are friends or family, so this reason also makes sense if they use positive politeness. The speaker tries to satisfy the listener's feelings to keep their relationship positive.

Negative politeness is shown in the findings, with only one category used by the expressions that use the question and hedge categories. For example, during an online class, Ibu Ayu said, "Andre and Pipit, can you turn on the camera?" when Andre and Pipit had not turned on their cameras during class. Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that teachers also use negative politeness in classroom interactions to show that the teacher is making requests to students respectfully so that the message conveyed does not threaten the students' faces or sound offensive. This is similar to research by Betaineh et al., (2023), which found that the question and hedge strategy was often used in dialogues. Off-record is a politeness strategy not found in this textbook's expressions of dialogue texts.

Off-record generally uses indirect and ambiguous language to convey messages to listeners. This expression can be used in very close relationships or in formal situations. The target users of the English for Nusantara textbook are seventh-grade students whose English language skills are at the beginner or intermediate level. Therefore, perhaps the author of this book did not use off-record dialogue expressions because this strategy contains implicit messages. This statement is supported by Ibnus and Mujiyanto (2018), who, off record, hardly appears in the textbooks because beginner-level students are not ready yet to understand pragmatic elements.

## CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded that only three of four politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) were found in dialogue texts in English for Nusantara textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school. Three of them are bald on record (n=8), positive politeness (n=65), and negative politeness (n=6). Meanwhile, off-record dialogues are not found in this textbook. Positive politeness is the most frequently used strategy in dialogue consisting of 10 categories: notice, exaggerating, using in-group identity markers, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, offering and promising, including both speaker and listener in the activity, giving or asking for reason, and give gifts to the hearer. Positive politeness is the most widely used strategy in dialogues of this textbook because the relationships between the characters are generally informal, such as between peers and family. So, there is a lack of variety in forms of communication. Providing a variety of contexts in communication to the dialogues is crucial to serve as an illustration of real-life communication for students.

In general, the researchers found that this textbook displays almost all dialogue texts in comic form so that students or readers can understand the context and appropriate expressions when communicating in English. Apart from that, the characters in the dialogue text are fixed and have been introduced at the beginning of the book, where the characters in each dialogue have a close relationship (family, friends, teacher-student), so almost all the dialogues in this book are in informal situations. However, informal situations do not prevent speakers from remaining polite and respectful to listeners, such as using negative politeness strategies. Providing polite expressions in English textbook dialogues can make Indonesian students aware of Indonesian culture in communicating, which is undoubtedly different from other countries. Indonesian students can learn English and the cultural values of Indonesian politeness in communicating simultaneously. The researchers found that the dialogues in this book were all conversations between people with close relationships, such as between peers, family, or teacher-students, which did not present various forms of communication. Therefore, the researchers suggests that future book authors of English textbooks can add dialogues between strangers so that the dialogues do not seem monotonous and the exploration of English communication can be broader.

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