



Negative Politeness Strategies in *English for Nusantara* Textbook for Learners

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Article Info

Article History:

Accepted 20

September 2023

Approved 11 January
2024

Published 15 March
2024

Keywords:

Negative politeness
strategies, English for
Nusantara Textbook

Abstract

Politeness involves using the pragmatic approach that is most appropriate and specific to a given situation. Additionally, politeness is essential in making conversation, especially in the scope of the school, which builds the character of learners in the association. Furthermore, the textbook is an essential instrument for the teacher as an instructor to manage to convey the material in the classroom. The analysis of negative politeness strategies in English textbooks provides valuable insights into how these strategies help students understand approaches that avoid force or interrupt others' space, thereby fostering respect and minimizing potential threats to one's self-esteem or social status. Hence, this study aimed to analyze the use of negative politeness strategies in an English textbook entitled "*English for Nusantara*". This study carried out a qualitative method with content analysis. Content analysis provided deep insight into how these strategies were implemented and how they influenced students' understanding of respectful and inclusive communication through English textbooks. The findings showed that three sub-strategies were realized in the book. They are questioning and hedging, giving deference, and apologizing. The dominant sub-strategy was found giving deference. The implication of giving deference, particularly through honorific expressions, suggests a strategy where speakers employ respectful language or titles when referring to the person they are addressing. Additionally, Questioning and hedging involved making requests a politely and using language that softens the impact of statements, indicating a degree of uncertainty or politeness. Meanwhile, apologizing plays a significant role in maintaining harmony and repairing relationships when misunderstanding occurs.

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p-ISSN 2087-0108

e-ISSN 2502-4566

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is a linguistic discipline that examines a branch of language closely linked to language and the contexts in which it is used. Lycan (2008) provides a similar concept of pragmatics. From a pragmatic perspective, one must also grasp the context in which the conversation takes place to grasp the speaker's message. Pragmatic refers to how someone communicates to convey their intended meaning in a particular situation (Horn & Ward, 2006). *Pragmatics* is defined as the investigation into understanding the speaker's intention. It involves analyzing the significance underlying the speaker's expressions. Hence, the hearer must be capable of inferring the speaker's intent from their verbal expression. Yule (2006) said contextual meaning involves the conversation's location, timing, situation, and individuals involved. Every aspect that might influence how the speaker's statement is understood. Thus, to fully understand the speaker's genuine intention, the listener needs to connect the speaker's words with the context. As Levinson (1997) articulated, pragmatics investigates the interplay between language and context, serving as the cornerstone for comprehending speech.

Context plays a vital role in communication, aiding in understanding the speaker's message, a point emphasized in various definitions of pragmatics. Top of Form According to Yule (2006), context involves the physical surroundings or natural elements present in the vicinity of the speaker. The physical context refers to where the speaker and listener engage in conversation. Yule (2006) emphasizes the significance of context in understanding conversational meaning, outlining four key components within it: the previous statement, environmental surroundings, social dynamics, and power dynamics, as well as the shared background between the speaker and the listener.

Background knowledge and the physical setting are necessary for a straightforward interpretation. Furthermore, in pragmatic theory, politeness is seen as a collection of strategies aimed at enhancing one's image and cultural

sensitivity, which affects the selection of strategies.

Politeness is related to always paying attention to behavior, conveying utterances to others, or using polite language. Some expressions show typical politeness, such as expressions that someone utilizes to avoid being too direct and expressions that demonstrate regard or consideration for others. To show respect, mention address forms such as *Sir* or *Madam* and deliver polite language like *thank you, please, excuse me, or sorry* (Watts, 2003). Meanwhile, As Leech (2014) has said, politeness is communicative altruism. It means humans communicate politeness through language or behaviour to satisfy others' faces. Additionally, politeness expresses other's values, not to himself. An example in real life is when someone performs his talent; then the audience claps, which shows politeness and appreciation of the performer. Additionally, Bowing is a physical gesture marked to respect others, and the more you bow, the deeper you convey politeness. So, politeness is not only conveyed through speech but can also be delivered by showing behaviour such as gesture communication to convey respect for others.

Additionally, Politeness is essential in making conversation, especially in the scope of school. It builds the character of learners in association, which they will apply not only with their schoolmates or teachers but also when they socialize outside of school to become social human beings. Within the scope of the school, the role model is the teacher; thus, to build learners' character, the teacher must set an example of good behaviour and actions. In addition, language politeness material in a textbook demands critical notice and knowledge to assist learners and teachers in character development.

Textbooks are evaluated in each language classroom, and they serve numerous functions in the English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum, aiding in facilitating language instruction and acquisition. Textbooks are among the elements that can influence students, encouraging or discouraging them, depending on their materials. The textbook is a resource for

teachers and learners (Zohrabi et al., 2014). Textbooks are significant in teaching and learning because they serve as a tool for teachers to convey material.

The contents of textbooks also play an essential function in guiding material since they impact students in terms of character development. Many teachers rely on textbooks to help them analyze and implement the curriculum (Ismael & Mohammadzadeh, 2022). As Huang (2019) said, Language textbooks play a crucial role in language learning, significantly impacting its effectiveness. The significance of utilizing textbooks is crucial in education efforts, particularly in language learning, such as foreign languages, which are very much needed to support students' skills, especially in English. In Indonesia, the process of learning English is known as foreign acquisition. In terms of pedagogy, to assist EFL teaching practice in Indonesia, textbook writers should examine the naturalness of the conversation (Oktavianti et al., 2020).

General expressions that teach about culture, pragmaticity, and appropriateness can be applied using politeness. In everyday communication, the importance of speaking appropriately can be seen in how people choose words and sentence structures that suit the situation and interpersonal relationships. As stated by Ogierman (2009), the result of a speech act is the application of politeness in selecting appropriate linguistics.

Models of speech act production, such as those developed in pragmatics, often include several fundamental assumptions, such as those developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). They offer politeness strategies, which relate to how speakers choose specific speech actions to achieve the desired politeness. Meanwhile, EFL learners often learn how to choose the right words and expressions to interact with other people politely and effectively in English. This involves understanding how context, social relationships, and communicative goals influence their choices in speaking.

Within the scope of English Language Teaching (ELT), students can apply politeness,

making them confident in carrying out conversations. At least they will be almost like native speakers. Further, textbooks have an essential role in ELT. Textbooks allow EFL learners to communicate in the target language (Tok, 2010). So, textbooks can help EFL students to achieve their target language. Therefore, there is a need for strategies found in textbook content that encourage students to become more proficient in language according to the target language, especially English. On the other hand, Brown and Levinson (1987) outline four classifications of politeness strategies aimed at preserving the hearer's face, namely bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. This study examined the aspect of negative politeness in conversations found in the English textbook for eighth graders in "*English for Nusantara*"

The researcher was interested in exploring negative politeness due to its relevance to Indonesian cultural practices, where people value discretion and indirectness in communication, particularly in consideration of others' feelings. This cultural trait is especially important in the context of student-teacher interactions, where students are expected to show respect towards their teachers.

Several previous studies have been done by some researchers regarding politeness strategies in learning activities in the classroom. They focused on the utterances that interact among students and between students and teachers (Gunaningtyas & Fitriati, 2021; (Alakrash & Bustan, 2020; Yoga et al., 2018; Esfahlan & Boroumand, 2020; Latrech & Alazzawie, 2023; Almoabdi, 2022). Additionally, another study was undertaken to analyze politeness strategies among both male and female teachers and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and International Learners in the classroom (Dujani et al., 2019; García-Fuentes & McDonough, 2018; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2018).

Furthermore, numerous research papers examine how politeness was employed in online learning settings. These studies investigate the communication dynamics between students and teachers across platforms such as WhatsApp,

email, and Messenger (Santoso & Indriani, 2021; Sudeni, 2022; Algiovan, 2022; Eshghinejad & Moini, 2016). Other researchers showed results that emoticons in messages are capable of carrying out redress actions in politeness (Pathanasin & Eschstruth, 2022).

Elsewhere, politeness strategies are observed in various contexts, such as talk shows, where hosts and guests alike employ them in their interactions. In this study, researchers utilized qualitative methodology to investigate politeness strategies. They found that positive politeness was the predominant approach in talk show programs, with hosts employing diverse forms of politeness strategies to mitigate the occurrence of face-threatening acts (FTA) (Dharmayanti et al., 2018; Hutahaean et al., 2021; Martisa et al., 2021; Muhtadi et al., 2022; Ruansyah & Rukmini, 2018).

Additionally, several researchers are analyzing written utterances in textbooks. The researchers employed qualitative methodologies for data analysis. The data showed that positive and negative politeness strategies are fundamental tactics frequently illustrated in textbooks and positive politeness can also be found in prophetic educational values in Indonesian language textbooks (Meiratnasari et al., 2019; Prayinto et al., 2022).

Other researchers explore the peace values reflected in the content of English textbooks such as positive self-context, tolerance, solidarity, social responsibility, and care for the environment (Gebregeorgis, 2017). Related to other researchers, they analyzed the extent to which EFL book users promoted the immersion education contained in the book's content (Akban & Yavuz, 2022). Additionally, English foreign language textbooks provide pragmatic content to foreign language learners, manifested in speech acts like apologizing, refusing, and demanding (Meihami & Khanlarzadeh, 2015), and politeness strategies were identified. Furthermore, Gholami (2015) discovered that Iranian English textbooks indirectly portrayed politeness strategies concerning speech acts.

Nevertheless, despite existing research on politeness strategies in textbooks and

conversational contexts, previous analyses have not specifically targeted the integration of politeness strategies derived from Brown and Levinson's framework within the conversational sections of textbooks aligned with the Independent Curriculum. Notably, the Independent Curriculum represents a recent educational approach aimed at providing teaching materials for Indonesian schools. In line with initial investigations conducted by the researcher, it was found that 15 out of 20 English teachers have utilized the book 'English for Nusantara' in their instructional practices. This indicates that the textbook has significant

This research examines the application of Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies in the textbook "English for the Archipelago" for eighth grade. From this research, students can contribute to educational practice, such as by improving the curriculum, educators can identify norms of politeness and pragmatic use of language. In addition, teacher-student interactions that improve classroom dynamics include building a harmonious classroom atmosphere by setting an example and teaching appropriate negative politeness through giving respect, making requests more politely using gentle language such as improving students' ability to interact socially and providing a sense of respect the person you are talking to appropriately. Meanwhile, its contribution in a pragmatic context is to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of using negative politeness strategies in an educational context, thereby validating or refining the existing theoretical framework.

METHOD

This research employed qualitative methods, incorporating content analysis. Content analysis was utilized to analyze of negative politeness sub-strategies in the conversation section of the "English for Nusantara" textbooks designed for eighth-grade students in junior high schools. The researcher took conversations on every page and chapter in the book. In qualitative, content analysis has six components

(Krippendorff, 2004). It follows the step-by-step; 1. Unitizing; 2. Sampling; 3. Recoding/ coding; 4. Reducing; 5. Analytical construct; 6. Narrating. Data analysis involves

organizing and categorizing data for analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe the data analysis process as consisting of reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions or verification.

The researcher applied data coding to the collected data, aiming to facilitate the analysis of the condensed data and provide a clear description of the analyzed data. Below is the data coding.

- a. The sequence of data numbers under analysis was represented using numbers such as 001, 002, 003, etc.
- b. Capital letters of the alphabet were employed to negative politeness strategies (NP)

A numerical following the alphabetic capital letter was utilized to indicate the specific strategy number of each politeness strategy. Example PP(2), it means Positive Politeness, number 2. After that, researcher gave the capital letter P means before the number of strategy to differentiate from the data. Example: P.2, so it means page 21.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The representation of the negative politeness strategy

Negative politeness is a repressive action that gives freedom of action toward the negative face being addressed (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Negative politeness involves addressing the negative-face needs of the hearer, which typically manifests through the speaker's modesty, formality, and restraint. This approach considers specific facets of the hearer's self-image and his desire for freedom from imposition. In this strategy, the data found 14 conversations that contained negative politeness. The most commonly observed sub-strategies involved showing deference, while the least frequently

used sub-strategies were those involving apologies. The results are displayed in Table 1

Table 1 Negative politeness strategy is presented in the textbook *English for Nusantara* eighth grade

Types of sub-strategy	Frequency
Being conventionally indirect	0
Questioning, hedging	3
Being pessimistic	0
Minimizing the imposition	0
Giving deference	9
Apologizing	2
Impersonalizing speaker and hearer	0
Stating the FTA as a general rule	0
Nominalizing	0
Going on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebteding hearer	0
Total	14

for learners

Table 1 shows that there are three sub-strategies presented in the book. they are questioning, hedging (3 occurrences), giving deference (9 occurrences), and apologizing (2 occurrences). Meanwhile, the utilization of being conventionally indirect, being pessimistic, minimizing the imposition, impersonalizing the speaker and hearer, stating the FTA as a general rule, nominalizing, and going on record as incurring debt, or as not indebteding hearer do not occur in the book. Following that, explanations for each of the sub-strategies are provided below.

Data 1 01/NP(2)/P.72

Galang: "My goodness! I almost forgot about it. **Can we listen to it together?"**

Monita: "Sure thing. I'll use the loudspeaker then"

The conversation happens in the classroom. The context of the conversation is that Galang almost forgot his assignment. Their assignment was to listen to a story, and Monita

listened. Here, Galang wanted to join to listen with Monita. Galang's utterance contained negative politeness because he conveyed a request gently to the hearer. He said, "**Can we listen to it together?**" indicating that he was hedging to the hearer to the occurrence of the FTA. In line with Martisa et al, (2021) demonstrated that to satisfy the listener's negative face, speakers often used questioning and hedging strategies. These strategies help to mitigate the imposition of requests or statements, allowing the listener to maintain their autonomy and avoid feeling pressured. Questioning and hedging soften the interaction, making it less direct and more polite, which aligns with the principles of negative politeness by respecting the listener's desire not to be imposed upon. Another instance illustrating negative politeness is evident in the following data 2.

Data 2

02/NP(2)/P92

Ugly Duckling: "Can I please stay here?"

Chicken: "why we do care?"

The conversation happened between the Ugly duckling and the chicken. In this case, the ugly duckling was looking friend because his siblings did not accept him. After all, the ugly duckling was different from his siblings. Firstly, the ugly duckling met the chicken. Additionally, he asked the chicken with the sentence "**Can I please stay here?**" it showed that the ugly duckling used hedging to request chicken. This is the way how to apply negative politeness. Other research also showed that there were efforts to minimize the occurrence of FTA by using negative politeness. The speaker used the minimize the imposition because the interlocutor has more power than the speaker (Dharmayanti et al., 2018). Another case demonstrating negative politeness is data 3.

Data 3

03/NP(2)/P.92

Ugly Duckling: "Can I please stay here?"

Cow : "Why do I care?"

The conversation occurred in the farm when the ugly duckling was looking for friends

who wanted to accept him. Previously ugly duckling was rejected by chicken because he was ugly. In this case, the ugly duckling met the cow and he said "**Can I please stay here?**" he showed a request to the hearer to stay with the hearer. It indicated the usage of negative politeness because the speaker did not imposition on the hearer's face or the speaker gave freedom to respond to the speaker's utterance.

Data 4

04/NP(05)/P.25

Galang: "Assalamualaikum"

Pak Rahmasyah: "Waalaikumssalam. How's your school, Son?"

The conversation happened between Galang and Pak Rahmasyah. In this case, Pak Rahmasyah is Galang's father. The context of conversation occurred when Galang had just come back from school. He expressed a greeting to his father. Then, his father replied and asked how his son was doing with the sentence "How's your school, **Son?**" the father mentioned the hearer to use the address form to be gentle to reduce the occurrence of FTA toward the hearer (strategy 5. Giving deference)

Data 5

05/NP(5)/P.25

Galang: it was good Dad. Today our school celebrated Independence Day and we had some games like marble in spoon race, sack race, and tug of war.

Pak Rahmasyah: "That's sounds fun!"

This conversation continued in Data 125. Galang is the speaker and Pak Rahmasyah is the hearer. in this case, Galang answered the question from his father previously. He said "It was good **Dad.**" it indicated that the speaker showed respect to the hearer. This is one way to apply negative politeness through the use of an address form towards the hearer.

Data 6

06/NP(5)/P.28

Galang: "Dad, please tell me more about the Panjat Pinang."

Pak Rahmasyah: "At the time, the committee put a lot of prizes like sarong, groceries, radio, TV, and even a bike on the top of the tree."

The conversation happened when Galang wanted to ask his father about panjat pinang. To

make it request, He asked his father to use “**Dad**” It showed a soft request to his father. In this case, the hearer was respected by the speaker because he used a form of address.

Data 7
07/NP(5)/P.84

Ugly Duckling: “Mom, they don’t want to play with me. Am I too ugly?”

Mother duck: “You are different. You are not yellow but gray and brave.”

The conversation occurred in the river. The ugly duckling went to play with his siblings, but his siblings rejected him because ugly duckling was different with them. In this case, ugly duckling to his mom “**Mom**, they do not want to play with me. Am I too ugly?” when ugly duckling asks his mom, he uses address form to mention his mom.

Data 8
08/NP(5)/P.88

Galang: “Yes, Bu. But, it was sad.”

Pipit: “I feel sorry for the Ugly Duckling.”

Galang and Pipit were listening to the story of an ugly duckling in the classroom. After listening to the story. Their teacher asked them about the story. Then, they answered it with varying expressions from each of them. When they mentioned their teacher like “Bu” they delivered a negative politeness strategy. It was marked by conveying the address form to the hearer. In line with Meiratnasari et al. (2019) found that the use of formal forms of address in academic environments functions as a negative politeness strategy to convey respect and show respect for lecturers. This strategy aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework by minimizing the potential for coercion and maintaining a respectful distance between speaker and listener, thereby recognizing hierarchical relationships and social norms in academic contexts.

Data 9
09/NP(5)/P.185

Galang: “Mom. What’s the name of the river?”

Ibu Posma: “It’s Sungai Lestari”

The conversation happened between Gilang and Ibu Posma. Ibu Posma is Galang's mother. The conversation occurred on a bridge and the bottom is a river. In this case, Galang asked his mother the name of the river with the

sentence “**Mom**. What’s the name of the river?”. Galang called his mother using the address form, he does not use his mother's name. It included giving respect to his mother.

Data 10
10/NP(5)/P.192

Tamara R: “Did it rain for hours, Kak Galang?”

Galang: “It happened heavily for almost two hours.”

The Data 10 was found in conversation 14 and page 192. Tamara and Galang are having the conversation. In this case, Tamara is Galang's younger sister. The context of this conversation occurred when they received news about the flood. Tamara asked Galang, she called her brother using honorific expressions like “Kak”. This showed that Tamara conveyed her utterance using negative politeness, namely giving deference.

Data 11
11/NP(5)/P.193

Tamara: “Daddy I want!”

Pak Rahmansyah: “The gutters got clogged and made rainwater drain very slowly.”

This conversation continued Data 10. In this case, Tamara is the speaker, and Pak Rahmansyah as her father is the hearer. Here, Tamara requested her father. When he mentioned her father, she used the address form namely “**Dad**”. It indicated the speaker to show deference to the hearer. The speaker applied negative politeness name giving deference.

Data 12
12/NP(5,2)/P.259

Mirza: “Mum, can I join Winners football club?”

Mirza’s mum: “Do you really have to join the club?”

The conversation happened between Mirza and his mom. Mirza conveyed to his mom that he wanted to join the Winners football club with said “**Can I join Winners football club?**” it showed the usage of strategy 2 namely. He mentioned his mom employed address form as if “**Mum**”. It indicated the honorific expression to the hearer. Hence, the speaker attempted to minimize the occurrence of the FTA to the hearer.

Data 13
013/NP(6)/P.35

Monita: “Did you win the kerupuk race?”

Galang: “unfortunately, I didn’t win.”

Monita: Oh, sorry

Galang: That’s okay

The conversation happened between Monita and Galang. In the context of this conversation, Monia asked Galang that did he had won the kerrupuk race. Galang did not win. Hering the information, Monita immediately said “**sorry**” to Galang. Here, Monita was the speaker trying to redress the hearer’s face with the speaker’s beg forgiveness. It indicated the one way to convey the negative politeness strategy namely apologizing.

Data 14

014/NP(6)/P.261

Siti: *“I am sorry for underestimating you, Mirza. I should not have pushed you to be a goalkeeper. You are such a great midfielder!”*

Mirza: *“That is okay. Let’s practice together to become a better team.”*

The Data 14 was found in conversation 21 and page 261. In this case, Siti is the speaker and Mirza is the hearer. Here, Siti and Mirza were joining a competition football and they were a team in the competition. Previously, Siti underestimated Mirza that he could not play football. Previously, Siti asked Galang to be a goalkeeper because she felt that Galang was not good at playing football. Galang became a midfielder, he played well. Therefore, he apologized to Galang for the bad accusations against Galang. It showed one way of conveying negative politeness to the hearer.

The study explores how politeness strategies are adapted for a specific cultural and educational context (Indonesia, in this case). This contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting how universal theories of politeness can be tailored to fit local norms and values, providing a more nuanced understanding of politeness across different cultures. The contribution for educational insight is focusing on a textbook designed for young learners, the study offers insights into how politeness strategies are introduced and taught at an early educational stage. This can inform curriculum developers and educators about effective ways to incorporate politeness into language teaching, thus advancing pedagogical approaches within the field. Additionally, the study identifies particular politeness strategies used in the textbook. This detailed analysis adds to the theoretical framework by showing which strategies are

deemed most effective or appropriate for young learners. Moreover, by connecting theoretical concepts with practical examples from textbooks, this study bridges the gap between theory and practice. It provides a valuable reference for researchers and practitioners, demonstrating how theoretical concepts can be applied in real-world educational settings.

The contribution of this study in the context of cross-linguistic relevance shows how politeness strategies can be taught and understood in different linguistic and cultural settings, namely English texts in non-English speaking countries, thereby contributing to the application of politeness theory globally. lastly, this study increases the understanding of how politeness functions in educational contexts, particularly in textbooks designed for language learning. This knowledge can be used to improve the design and content of educational materials, ensuring that they effectively teach important social and communication skills.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to represent the use of Brown and Levinson’s negative politeness strategy in the conversation section of “English for Nusantara” for the class VIII textbook for Junior High School Learners. A content analysis was used to collect the data for this study. The researcher concluded that within the conversation section on English for Nusantara, three out of ten strategies were identified. The first strategy is questioning, and hedging which was conveyed in the form of a soft request or statement with modal verbs (can, could, will, might). The second strategy was giving deference which was employed in the honorific expressions, such as Dad, Mom, Bu, and som. The third strategy was apologizing which was conveyed by the hearer offering apologies to the listener when he committed an FTA. The researcher anticipates that future studies will investigate how negative politeness strategies are adapted and used in textbooks across different cultural contexts. This can reveal cultural influences on language use and politeness norms.

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