

An Analysis of Politeness Strategies in English Textbook Dialogues on Faith and Morality

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Abstract. Faith and morality have been parts of Indonesian society. The values of Pancasila as the national ideology are sufficient to prove that this nation's relationship with faith and morality has been inseparable. This study aims to analyze one of the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, "faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character," through the application of politeness strategies in textbook dialogues. The method of this study is qualitative content analysis. The data collection technique of this study is documentation. The data are in the form of dialogue texts from two textbooks from the series of "Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris." This study implements the politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1987) and the Pancasila Student Profile as part of Indonesia's character education as the frameworks of this study. After collecting and categorizing the data using those two frameworks, the results of this study show two elements of "faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character" to be represented through politeness strategies in the dialogue texts in both of the textbooks. These elements are "moral towards humans" and "moral towards nature." The results suggest textbook authors to include more balanced representation of all elements within "faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character" in order to develop students' character to be well-rounded individuals. These results also suggest teachers to utilize the textbook dialogues through various activities such as roleplay, group reading, and group discussion to help students learn various types of morality in interactive ways.

Keywords: English Textbook, Faith, Morality, Pancasila Student Profile, Politeness Strategies

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Introduction

Faith and morality have always been parts of Indonesia's ideology. The first and second values of Pancasila, "belief in the one and only God" and "just and civilized humanity," serve as proof that Indonesia was built with an ideology that

emphasizes faith and morality. As a nation whose ideology starts with faith towards God, Indonesia becomes a country that embodies several legal religions, such as Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Religion itself has the benefit of serving people with a perspective of meaningful and purposeful life, the right and wrong, and the knowledge of the afterlife (Elsayed *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, for some individuals, religion can be a source of meaning, community, guidance, and support that increase the quality of life and give a sense of guidance in navigating life complexities (Laksana & Wood, 2019).

Religion also goes hand in hand with morality. Historically, religion has been a crucial part of creating moral principles (Astrachan, Binz Astrachan, Campopiano & Baù, 2020). It manifested through moral values that stem from religious beliefs, particularly religious texts which typically contain teachings related to morality (Elsayed *et al.*, 2023). Religion serves the basic knowledge of the right and wrong, moral and immoral, and the limits on what actions are permissible or not (Vuong, Ho, Nguyen, Vuong, Tran, Hoang & La, 2020). Ethical and moral values can be defined as ethics or beliefs that provide guidance on how ones should act and the best decision to make in certain time (Fathallah *et al.*, 2020). Moral values can be applied broadly towards oneself, religious practices, other human beings, nature, and even in the context of being a good citizen.

In the effort of maintaining good morality, Indonesian schools currently implement the Pancasila Student Profile, a character education framework that is part of the Merdeka Curriculum. Rooted in Pancasila, the nation's foundational ideology and guiding philosophy. Prior to its adoption, schools followed the 18 values of character education introduced in 2010 by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Both frameworks share a key similarity: they prioritize faith and positive behaviour as their first dimension.

Several researchers have featured the analysis of the dimension “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” in their studies; some of these researchers highlighted the specific elements of said dimension that were found in their studies. Suryantari (2022) found eleven representations of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” that consist of elements such as “personal moral,” “moral towards humans,” and “moral towards nature” in the textbook “Work in Progress” for tenth-grade senior high school students. Furthermore, Sari and Ma’rifatulloh (2024) found eighteen representations of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” through the elements of “religious moral,” “personal moral,” “moral towards humans,” and “moral towards nature” in the textbook “English for Nusantara” for seventh-grade junior high school students. Moreover, Fani *et al.* (2024) found five depictions of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” that consist of the elements “personal moral,” “moral towards nature,” and “state moral” in the comic strips of the textbook “English for Nusantara” for eighth-grade junior high school students. In addition, Suharsiwi and Sari (2023) also found that the dimensions of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” were incorporated in the content of the “Thematic Teacher's Book” Curriculum 13 Edition for grade 1 elementary school students. Although they did not specify which elements were represented in the textbook.

The previous studies above revealed that the dimension of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” in the Pancasila Student Profile was found

to be represented in several English textbooks used by teachers and students in Indonesian schools. However, since there are many kinds of English textbooks on the market, further research related to the values of faith and morality in English textbook content needs to be done to analyze the similar values in different textbooks that are currently used by some teachers and students in Indonesia. Additionally, the previous studies have not analyzed the politeness aspect of the English textbooks, which can potentially give more interesting data on how the politeness strategies in the textbooks content can reflect the dimensions of faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character. Therefore, the author of this study decided to conduct a content analysis to explore the dimensions of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” that are represented through politeness strategies in two textbooks from a textbook series entitled “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris” for grade eight students of junior high school. The analysis of this study will be based on the following research questions:

1. What types of politeness strategies that represent the dimension of *faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character* in the textbook dialogues?
2. What elements of the dimension of *faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character* do the politeness strategies in the textbook dialogues represent?

Underlying Theories

This study combines the framework of the Pancasila Student Profile dimension called “faith and devotion to God Almighty and noble character” and politeness strategies that were proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The combination of these frameworks is because there is a connection between politeness and moral development, which was proven in several studies (Rohullah, 2017; Noviana & Atur, 2020). The details of these frameworks are as follows:

1. Faith and Morality

Faith or religion and morality have been historically intertwined, as stated by Joas (2006:19), that religions offer the stimulus and direction for values and morals. Beyers (2023) added that religions might seemingly have a role in accommodating moral structure for society. Juergensmeyer (2005) explained further that religion encourages society to embrace some values, especially honesty, justice, fair play, tolerance, and respect. In the context of Indonesian society, there are six religions that are legally recognized by the government. Six religions are officially recognized by the Indonesian government, which means that legal protection and rights for the people who follow these religions are ensured for the purpose of cultivating pluralism in religions and the harmonious coexistence between various religious communities. (Akhmadi, 2019). The six official religions in Indonesia are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. The variety of religions in Indonesia is rooted in the history, where there were intersections of multiple societies, trading paths, and cultural exchanges which happened for a long period of time, which resulted in the variety in religions that influences the characteristics of this nation (Hutabarat, 2023).

Despite the diversity of religions, Indonesia still holds the same values when it comes to morality. This is due to the ideology of Indonesia called “Pancasila.” The values of Pancasila include: 1) belief in the one and only God, 2) just and civilized humanity, 3) the unity of Indonesia, 4) democracy guided by the inner

wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives, and 5) social justice for all the people of Indonesia. In these elements of Pancasila, it can be seen how faith and morality go hand in hand as parts of Indonesian ideology. Rooted in these values of Pancasila, the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology created the “Pancasila Student Profile,” which is described by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim (2022), as a set of ideal personal traits and skills based on *Pancasila* as Indonesian ideology. The Pancasila Student Profile consists of six dimensions, namely: 1) faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character; 2) independence; 3) mutual cooperation; 4) global diversity; 5) critical reasoning; and 6) creativity. As expected, faith becomes the first thing that is mentioned in this framework, followed by noble character and other dimensions as well, which reflects the concept of morality.

These dimensions of Pancasila Student Profile are currently depicted in various English textbooks that are being sold in the market. Some textbooks such as the ones that are being studied in this research, “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A and 8B”, explicitly state that the content of these textbooks contain the said dimensions.

2. Politeness Strategies

Politeness is a crucial part of communication. Daulay et al. (2022) argued that politeness is necessary since it reflects the way a speaker shows respect to their reader or listener. They also mentioned that modifying one’s speech might give off less pressure to the listener. Yule (1996) stated that the function of politeness is to display mindfulness towards another person’s “face.” “Face” itself can be made up of a person’s reputation, prestige, and self-esteem (Culpeper, 2011). In understanding the types of approach people use in communicating with different people, politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) listed four categories of politeness, namely bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Brown and Levinson (1987) added that some variables, such as power, distance, and the rank of imposition, seem to affect the politeness level.

When it comes to the categories of politeness strategies mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1987), the short explanation according to them is as follows:

- 2.1. Bald-on-record: a strategy of politeness that comes in the form of direct sayings that do not contain any minimization to the imposition and are usually done in a direct, clear, explicit, and brief way.
- 2.2. Positive Politeness: a politeness strategy that put effort into paying attention towards the interest, wants, and goods of the hearer.
- 2.3. Negative Politeness: a compensated action spoken to the hearer’s “negative face,” which means their desire to have freedom about their action to be uninterrupted and their attention not to be disturbed.
- 2.4. Off-record: a politeness strategy that implements indirect language and protects the speaker from the possibility of being imposed.

As we can see above, these politeness strategies mention different kinds of politeness levels that people generally apply in conversation. One of the factors that may influence people in applying politeness strategies is sociological variables (Salsabila & Rahayu, 2023). Brown and Levinson (1987) mentioned that sociological variables consist of social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition.

Method

This study implements qualitative content analysis in analyzing and presenting the result. Qualitative content analysis is described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) as a pragmatic and methodically controlled analysis of texts within their communicative context, adhering to content analytic principles and systematic models without excessive quantification. Patton (2002) defined qualitative content analysis as any effort to reduce and make sense of qualitative by taking certain amount of qualitative material and aiming to figure out their meanings and consistency.

The data collection technique of this study is documentation. Documentation is a data collection method that is applied to gather data from books, documents, archives, and pictures that can be used to support research (Sugiyono, 2018). In this study, the data that are collected are in the form of dialogue texts taken from two textbooks from the same series, “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A and 8B” for junior high school grade 8, that contain both politeness strategies and the dimension of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” from the Pancasila Student Profile. The politeness theory by Brown & Levinson (1987) is applied to analyze the data of this study. Furthermore, the process of data analysis in this study follows the technique of Miles & Huberman (1994), consisting of three key points, namely, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

Findings and Discussion

The result of the data analysis reveals several variations in the frequency of politeness strategies and the dimensions of faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character across two English textbooks, “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A and 8B,” for junior high school grade eight. The details of the results are presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Representation of Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Character in “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A”

No.	Elements of Faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character	Types of Politeness Strategies	Number	Percentage (%)
1.	Religious morals	-	0	0
2.	Personal morals	-	0	0
3.	Morals towards humans	Positive politeness	1	14.3
4.	Morals towards nature	Positive politeness	6	85.7
5.	State morals	-	0	0
Total			7	100

Table 2. Representation Of Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, And Noble Character In “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8B”

No.	Elements of Faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character	Types of Politeness Strategies	Number	Percentage (%)
1.	Religious morals	-	0	0
2.	Personal morals	-	0	0
3.	Moral towards humans	Positive politeness	5	45.5
4.	Moral towards nature	Positive politeness	4	36.4
		Negative politeness	2	18.2
5.	State morals	-	0	0
Total			11	100

The Types of Politeness Strategies That Represent the Elements within the Dimension of Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Character in the Textbook Dialogues

In the presented data above, it is shown that in the textbook “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A,” the politeness strategy which represents the elements within the dimension of faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character is positive politeness. This strategy is found six times (85.7%) in representing “moral towards nature” and once (14.3%) in representing “moral towards humans” in the textbook dialogues.

In the data that represent moral towards nature, the positive politeness in the textbook dialogues comes in the form of “including both the speaker and the hearer”, “exaggerating interest on the hearer”, and “attending to the hearer’s interests/needs/wants”. Example of the utterances that involve both the speaker and the hearer can be seen in the dialogues between Banyu and Tirta in page 99 where Tirta said *“I think we should start fixing any leaks in our house.”* The word “we” in this utterance implies that Tirta includes Banyu in the activity that he suggested. Furthermore, the example of utterance that shows exaggerated interest on the hearer can be seen in the part where Banyu responds to Tirta’s suggestion regarding fixing the leaks in their house by saying *“That’s a good point. Any other ideas?”* in which it implies that there is an attempt to exaggerate his interest towards Tirta’s idea by complimenting it and ask for his other ideas. Moreover, the part of the dialogue texts that shows the attempt of attending to the hearer’s interests/needs/wants can be seen in Banyu’s question to Tirta, *“What do you think about installing low-flow shower heads and toilets?”* which implies that Banyu tries attending to Tirta’s interest towards his suggestion.

Furthermore, the politeness strategy that represents moral towards humans in this textbook comes in the form of “attending to the hearer’s interests/needs/wants,” which can be seen on page 55, where Tiara asked Raditya about his injury by saying, “I’m sorry to hear that. How did that happen?” which shows that Tiara tries to attend to Raditya’s condition by showing empathy towards his injury.

Meanwhile, in the textbook “*Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8B*,” the politeness strategies that are shown in the result are positive politeness and negative politeness. The most frequently applied strategy in the textbook dialogues is positive politeness, which is found five times (45.5%) in representing “moral towards humans” and four times (36.4%) in representing “moral towards nature,” followed by negative politeness, which is found twice (18.2%) in representing “moral towards nature.”

In these data, positive politeness that represents moral towards humans contains several strategies such as “attending to the hearer’s interests/needs/wants” and “including both the speaker and the hearer.” The example of utterances that put effort into attending to the hearer’s interests/needs/wants can be seen on page seven, where Dewi asks Harry by saying, “What do you think about blood donation?” which implies that Dewi attempts to attend to Harry’s interest towards her topic. Furthermore, the example of utterances that include both the speaker and the hearer is seen on the same page, where Harry responds to Dewi by saying, “*I think it’s very significant if we can donate our blood.*” The word “we” in this utterance implies that Harry involves Dewi in the activity he refers to.

Furthermore, the positive politeness that represents moral towards nature includes the strategies of “including both the speaker and the hearer” and “exaggerating interest in the hearer.” The example of the strategy that includes both the speaker and the hearer can be found on page 3, where a boy said to a girl, “We should turn off the lights for an hour to contribute to saving earth.” The word “we” shows that the boy includes the girl in the conversation. Moreover, the example of the strategy that exaggerates interest in the hearer can be found on page 23 in the conversation between Romy and his dad, Mr. Ian, where Romy reacted to his dad, who tells him about their garden, by saying, “*Wow! They look fresh and healthy!*” The surprised expression and compliment in this utterance show how Romy exaggerates his interest towards his dad’s current interest.

The next politeness strategy that was found in the data is negative politeness, which represents morals towards nature. The negative politeness in the data is in the form of “being indirect.” The example of this strategy can be found on page 49, where Amanda said to Goya, “*But why is the light still on? It’s a waste of energy.*” Which reflects her protest towards Goya’s action. However, instead of straight-up scolding him, she said a question that was followed with a comment.

The Elements of the Dimension of Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Character That Are Represented Through the Politeness Strategies

Based on the presented data above, in the textbook “*Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A*,” the element that is represented the most is “moral towards nature,” which is represented six times (85.7%) through positive politeness, followed by “moral towards humans,” which is depicted once (14.3%) through positive politeness. Unfortunately, the other elements, such as personal, religious, and state morals, are not found in the results.

In these data, the morals towards nature that are represented through positive politeness put emphasis on minimizing water waste around households. Examples of this practice are presented on page 99, where Tirta suggests to Banyu about his idea by saying, “*Well, I also think we should shorten our shower time and turn off the tap while we brush our teeth.*” Another message about saving water is also presented in Banyu’s utterance, “*I think we could also collect rainwater to water*

the plants and garden during the dry season.” Both Tirto’s and Banyu’s utterances deliver various methods to minimize unnecessary water use.

In addition, from the data we can also see morals towards humans that are represented through positive politeness, which focuses on practicing empathy among human beings. For instance, on page 55, Tiara asked Redita regarding his injury by saying, “I’m sorry to hear that. How did that happen?” which reflects her effort of showing empathy to Raditya.

Furthermore, in the textbook “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8B,” the most frequently found element in the textbook dialogue is “morals toward humans,” which is found in the form of positive politeness four times (45.5%), followed by the element “morals toward nature,” which is represented four times (36.4%) in the form of positive politeness and twice (18.2%) in the form of negative politeness. On the other hand, the results do not show the representation of the other three elements (personal moral, state moral, and religious moral) through any type of politeness strategy in the textbook dialogues.

In the presented data, the moral towards humans that are portrayed in positive politeness emphasizes on empathy towards other human beings. The example of it can be seen in page 31 where Roy responded to Gea’s experience in mountain climbing by saying “*It must be challenging.*” Which reflects his attempt in understanding Gea’s experience at the moment. Another example of his element is in page 50 where Lidia asked about Leon’s condition by saying “*Are you okay, Leon? You look tired.*” Which shows how she tries to acknowledge Leon’s condition.

Additionally, the moral towards nature which is displayed through positive politeness and negative politeness focuses on saving energy, growing and taking care of plants, and appreciating others’ effort in taking care of environment. For instance, in page 3, a boy said to a girl, “*We should turn off the lights for an hour to contribute to saving earth.*” Which implies his suggestion regarding saving energy. The next one, in page 23, where Romy responded to his dad, Mr. Ian, about the vegetables in their garden by saying “*Wow! They look fresh and healthy! We have taken care of them well, Dad.*” Which implies that they have looked after those vegetables very well. Moreover, in page 29 where Arya responded to Cindy’s explanation about the people who cleaned and built facilities around a river by saying “*Wow, such a great change!*” which shows how he acknowledges and appreciating other people’s effort in taking care of the environment. In addition, another example can be seen in page 49 where Amanda scolded Goya by saying “*But why is the light still on? It’s a waste of energy.*” Which reflects her concern of saving energy and avoiding wasting it when it is not needed.

From the findings presented above, it can be seen that in both textbooks, in the textbook “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8A,” the elements of “morals toward humans” and “morals toward nature” were represented through positive politeness. Additionally, in the textbook “Buku PR Interaktif Bahasa Inggris 8B,” the element of “morals toward humans” was represented through positive politeness, and the “moral towards nature” was represented through positive politeness and negative politeness. This study is in line with the previous studies (Suryantari, 2022; Sari & Ma’rifatulloh, 2024; Fani *et al.*, 2024), which also found the elements within the dimension of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character” in Indonesian English textbooks.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study found there are only two elements that are being portrayed in the textbook through politeness strategies; they are “moral towards humans” and “moral towards nature.” Additionally, the politeness strategies that are applied and represent those elements are positive politeness and negative politeness. In detail, the positive politeness represents both “morals toward humans” and “morals toward nature” in the first textbook. Besides, in the second textbook, the positive politeness also represents both “morals toward humans” and “morals toward nature.” Moreover, negative politeness represents “morals towards nature.” However, the lack of depiction of other elements, such as “personal morals,” “religious morals,” and “state morals” in the textbooks, shows an imbalanced representation of the elements within the dimension of “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character.” It is important for textbook authors to consider integrating more balanced representation for these elements because in order to develop students’ character into well-rounded individuals, exposing them to a wide range of morality is crucial to promote positive behavior not only toward humans and nature but also toward other aspects such as their religious belief, their own self, and their country. It is also essential for teachers to incorporate these elements into their teaching process, which can be done by using the textbook content, such as the dialogue text, to do fun activities with students, including roleplay, group reading, and group discussion. Through these activities, teachers can introduce various elements within “faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character,” which will help with students’ character development.

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