Depicting the politeness strategy of Tower of God’s author

Enggar Nurazizah1; Ajar Pradika Ananta Tur1; Martin Asta Evans2; Dennis Ivan Jones3

1English Literature Study Program, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia
2Department of Asian Studies, Rutgers University, the United States of America
3Discipline of African-American Studies, University of Natal, South Africa

Corresponding Email: ajar.pradika@enlitera.uad.ac.id


Politeness strategy does not merely connect to reality between several persons but in imagination of one person as well like depicted in webtoons. This research contributes to give insight how to elaborate the politeness strategy expressed by one person, as author, in form of utterances. By using qualitative approach, the data were analyzed descriptively and concluded to get the line of politeness strategy. The results of the analysis in this study will be briefly describing 4 types of politeness strategy found in the conversations between the characters of the Tower of God season 1. Firstly, Bald on-record which consist of giving orders, making requests, giving warnings, and giving statements. Secondly, positive politeness which consist of seeking agreement and avoiding disagreements, making offers, promises, optimism, giving gifts (understanding and cooperation), showing flock loyalty, etc. Thirdly, negative politeness which consist of apologize for coercion, be indirect, pessimistic, minimize imposing, use questions, pay respects. Fourthly, off record which consist of ironic, vague and ambiguous, incomplete. Meanwhile, there are 4 functions found in Tower of God season 1.
I. INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, almost everything we do becomes more instantaneous and easier. Like a digital comic or called a webtoon. Webtoon is a comic feature on smartphones that makes it easier for users if they want to use it, it can be read whenever and wherever the user wants. In the webtoon there are many types of genres, so users can determine what genre they like and are interested in. The most important role when reading comics is that the reader learns the language. Language is a tool used when communicating or conveying our ideas or thoughts.

Several media in Indonesia recommended the Tower of God webtoon to be read, and this webtoon is included in the 7 recommended webtoons. The Tower of God webtoon is not only released in Korea and Indonesia, but this webtoon has been released in 28 languages including Indonesian. Not only in the form of digital comics, but because of its soaring popularity, this webtoon was also released in the form of a video game from Tower of God. Many readers are satisfied with the storyline of the webtoon and the soaring popularity of this webtoon, one of the companies in Japan is interested in making the Tower of God anime series. The series released in April 2020 called Kami no To Tower of God in the Japanese version.

In the Tower of God webtoon there are 3 seasons and, in each season, there are about 70-80 episodes. Researchers took season 1 for this study which contained about 78 episodes. This webtoon tells the story of the struggle of a bam (main character) to win the battle on the floor in a tower to achieve the goals that everyone expects, including himself. This action-packed, dark fantasy webtoon allows readers to understand and learn about the struggles and triumphs of the tower dwellers and gradually the mysteries will be revealed or added to add flavor to this story.

There are many branches of linguistics, one of which is pragmatics. According to Levinson (1983) pragmatics is the study of aspect of language that requires reference to the users of the language then led to a very natural. Pragmatics is the study of learning about the meaning and truth of words or sentences that are contained when a person communicates. Communication is one-way humans communicate. Communication has many types of speech, such as expressions in speech. Expressions in speech can be expressions when apologizing, asking for help, sympathy, happiness, etc.

Living in the digital era makes it easy for us to do work or communicate remotely or near. We live in a digital era that has several advantages and disadvantages, one of which is communication. According to G.G Brown “Communication is transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver” (acited). Communication is important in dealing with other people, therefore in communicating
there are manners and manners in speaking. One of the disadvantages of using the internet is the loss of politeness in speaking.

Therefore, the importance of the value of politeness in communication is very influential for the comfort of everyone. When someone speaks politely it will make the other person feel comfortable. Politeness is one of the studies in pragmatic that focuses on the study of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), they categorize them into 4 types of politeness strategies, such as Bald-on-record, Negative politeness, Positive politeness, and Off record.

II. METHOD

The data in this study are utterances of characters found in The Tower of God that contain politeness strategy. The data source in this study are Season 1 that consisted of 78 episodes of the Tower of God webtoon, which was released on September 7, 2016 in Indonesia through webtoon application. The webtoon entitled the Tower of God was originally released on the Naver webtoon platform owned by Naver Korea which was then published on the webtoon with an English translation in 2014 and in 2016 it was translated into Indonesian. The data were collected by downloading the webtoon application and searching the Tower of God season 1, observing the source of data for utterances containing politeness strategy, classifying the data into several strategies, analyzing the categorized data, and drawing conclusion.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tower of God provides a bunch of politeness strategy. However, in this research, four types of politeness strategy found dominant.

Bald on Record

Bald on record is generally found in people who have close relationships or know each other very well and they are very comfortable when communicating in an environment. This strategy is usually used when the speaker and listener know each other very well.

Context:

On the ground floor of the tower where the test took place, Baam met Headon who was the examiner of the test on that floor. Headon asks about Baam's goals and gives Baam some advice. It can be seen as the dialog below:

Headon: Instead of committing suicide, I think you should forget about it and move on with your life.
Bam: [ignored]

The type of politeness strategy used in this data includes a bald on-record strategy because the Headon warns to Bam. That's because as an examiner on the tower floor
he wants to give advice to Bam who is a unique participant because he has an innocent nature and is very easily excited when it comes to Rachel who is his close friend. As underlined above Headon said with clear to Baam, it's included in the bald on-record.

Context:

Being in the room on the first exam floor, princess Yuri and her bodyguards were looking at Baam who was doing the exam and wanted to help him because he saw it as troublesome. Princess Yuri went down to the exam floor and helped Baam but all the necessary items were brought by her bodyguard. It can be seen as the dialogue below:

Princess Y: hey evan! Don't just stand there. Come on down
Evan: Ouch! Why did he call me when there was Headon there.

This type of politeness strategy includes bald on-record because the speaker gives orders to interlocutor. The situation occurred when princess Yuri's wanted to see Baam's exams and wanted to help Baam in completing his exams. Princess Yuri did that because she wanted Evan to see directly the ongoing match and needed the bag that Evan was carrying. So, in the underlined sentence above princess Yuri gave orders to her bodyguards clearly, therefore it is included in the bald on-record.

Context:

Located on one of the floors within the tower, led by Hansungyu. Red hair who is his subordinate throws a tantrum during the exam and finally he asks Hansungyu for help. After Hansungyu cleared up his mess, he thanked him and ordered red hair. It can be seen as the dialogue below:

Hansungyu: silent, make me some coffee for me.
Red hair : alright.

This type of strategy used in this data is a bald on-record strategy to giving order. Hansung Yu give him order with clear and unambiguous to Red Hair to make her coffee, because Hansung Yu's status was higher than Red Hair and they already knew each other very well.

Positive politeness

This type of politeness strategy is to identify that someone wants their wishes or wishes to be well received and appreciated by others. Mostly positive politeness is used to show the loyalty of friends, claims, relationships with others, and also to show from both sides the speaker and listener have the same goal.
Context:

Happened when they finished doing the exam together. Khun who saw that Baam's presence would bring good influence for him to climb the tower with him. So he asked him to climb the tower with him. As seen in the dialogue below:

Bam : you?! want to tower with me?! I’m not good at fighting.. I don’t know anything.. I’m useless.
Khun : it’s okay.. you’ll be a nice friend

The type of politeness strategy used in this data is positive politeness to make an offer. The purpose of bam's words to offer this is because bam and khun have a common goal which is to climb the top of the tower even though he is not as strong as the others.

Context :

Mr. Leroro who was the leader of another floor came to visit Hansungyu. At that time, to break the calm between them Hansungyu offered Mr. Leroro. As seen in the dialogue below:

hansungyu: do you want coffee, lord leroro?
Mr. Leroro: Thank you, can you make a café latte?

This type of strategy is included in positive politeness because it provides an offer. This situation happened because Mr. Lero Ro came to visit Hansung Yu where Hansungyu was the leader of that floor and Leroro was the assistant of another floor leader. Hansungyu offered Leroro coffee so that the situation was not awkward.

Context :

At night at the resting place of the examinees. Baam had met Rachel but Rachel got an injury that made her unable to walk. Khun and Bam who are close friends in the team, Bam also made a statement to Khun. As seen in the dialogue below:

Bam : I will be rachel's feet and help her climb the tower. So I ask you to join me.
Khun : [listen]

The type of politeness strategy used in this data includes a politeness strategy to show an agreement. The situation in the conversation was when Bam and Khun were communicating about Rachel being injured. The situation happened because Bam and Khun knew each other and wanted to solve problems together.

Negative Politeness

In the use of negative politeness people will show respect, emphasize the requests of others, and apologize for coercion. This strategy is usually used to minimize threats to other people's faces. Through this strategy, it can be indicated that there is freedom to decide something, so that no one feels burdened, disturbed and pressured by a
decision. This kind of negative politeness strategies such as using hedging, using indirect strategies, pessimism, minimizing coercion, using questions, saluting.

Context:

In the afternoon in the cave where Bam lived. Rachel is Baam's only playmate due to the situation that it was late at night saying goodbye to Baam. Like the dialogue below:

Rachel: sorry, bam. I want to invite you, but I can't do it. Next time I will play longer with you.
Bam: nothing, nothing i can do alone rachel...

The sentence "sorry, bam. I want to invite you" is to show an apology through negative politeness. The situation happened because Rachel who accompanied Baam would leave him to go somewhere without taking him. The speaker wants to apologize because he will be leaving because of a situation that makes it impossible to invite the other person to talk.

Off record

This strategy is used by speakers who prefer their needs or desires to be known by others without having to express their desires in language. In addition, the use of this strategy can be known through ambiguous statements or indirectly. The types of off-record strategies are using metaphors, being ironic or subtle satire, being vague and ambiguous, incomplete, using ellipsis and rhetorical questions.

Context:

Inside the hall where the participants gather together. Narae was with the knight when he came to this exam floor, Narae who was afraid of the crowd spoke to his knight. Like the dialogue below:

Narae: I've never been to a place as crowded as this.. my knight.. I'm scared
Knight: don't be afraid princess narae. I will always be your shield.

Knight's speech is included in the category that uses off-record because it includes the use of metaphorical sentences. The situation happened because of the bustling atmosphere and the narae wasn't used to the crowd. Knight who was an acquaintance of his tried to calm Narae down.

Context:

At the entrance examination hall, where all face the test by entering the shinsu (door that has power). Shibisu and the witch who were very noisy because they couldn't even open the door disturbed Lauroe's sleep, and Lauroe spoke to them. As in the dialogue below:

Shibisu: what? I can't be worse than this witch arghhh...!!
Witch: open aarghshhsh..!!
Mr. Lauroe: Can you guys chat outside the tower? It's a place to sleep.

The type of strategy used in this data is an off-record strategy because it is included in the use of ironic sentences. The context of the conversation above occurs because the mute and the magic woman can't enter the next arena and it disturbs Laurie who likes quietness.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

The politeness strategy is a pragmatics perspective in which the operation is typically deduced from the contributions of others. The issue is that others need to comprehend the fundamental nature of the strategy. The strategy that is triggered by a vacant mind is ineffective in society. This research reveals an alternative viewpoint. Instead of anticipating responses from others regarding the effectiveness of the speaker's strategy, this study examines the comprehension of the strategy as articulated by a single individual, the author of Tower of God. The research figures that the success or failure of this strategy may be determined by a single author's consideration of the politeness strategy. The author may also determine the context and manner in which the strategy is implemented.

**REFERENCES**


Jong-hui, L. (2010). Webtoon Tower of God


Maria, S. (2016). A study of politeness strategies as shown by the four main characters in begin again movie. Universitas Sanata Darma.


