# Politeness Strategies for Men on *WhatsApp social media*

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*Abstract*

*Men's politeness in social media is still often ignored. This article aims to describe male-language politeness strategies in group WA conversations. This research is descriptive qualitative. The population were all the speeches in the WA alumni/bachelor (GA) group and the class/student group (GK). Data collection in WA conversations was taken in August-September 2022. The data collection technique was by taking screenshots on the WA group. Then use the note-taking technique into MS Word. The data that has been collected is then coded based on Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness. The findings show that male conversational in GK tends to use blunt politeness strategies and positive politeness strategies. Whereas in GA, men tend to use positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. This shows that the speech of men in GK tends to be less polite, especially if the interlocutor has close social distance with him. While in GA conversations, male speech tends to be more polite seen from the choice of using language politeness strategies. Men's utterances in GA conversations seem to rarely use frank politeness strategies even though their interlocutors have close social distances with them. This shows that the older a person is, the more careful they are in speaking. It is also inseparable from the educational factor. It is recommended that lecturers and other stakeholders to pay more attention to the politeness of the language of students, both male and female. By complying with the language politeness strategy, the relationship between the speaker and the speech partner will run harmoniously.*

*Keywords: Gender, WhatsApp, Politeness Strategies, Education Level, Age.*

## PRELIMINARY

In this digital era, people generally interact using social media. Social media has now become a major need after its initial position was only as a complementary need. Needs that seem to be a condition of existence and become the entrance or portal to socializing connectivity in the current era (Nasrullah, 2015: 27). This does not only apply to millennials, but from various groups such as parents and even children in interacting with other users. Reportal data in his research shows that the number of Indonesian social media users reached 19.4 million or equivalent to 68.9% of the total population in Indonesia in January 2022 (Jemadu & Prasatya, www.voice.com/sum-user-media-social-indonesia-reach-1914-million-per-2022 , accessed 15 September 2022). This fact shows that social media cannot be separated from people's lives.

Popular social media among Indonesian people such as *Facebook* , *WhatsApp* , *YouTube* , *Instagram* , *Tik Tok* , and so on. Among the various social media platforms, *WhatsApp* is the most frequently used interactive social media. *WhatsApp* (hereinafter referred to as WA) is a cross- *platform online messenger application* on *smartphones* that serves to send and receive messages. Its fast, easy and inexpensive nature makes this application one of the most widely used *platforms by the people of Indonesia.* It is recorded that 84% of internet users in Indonesia are WA users (Hootsuite, 2020). Busy WA notifications pop up every time, even a matter of seconds, proving that this application is indeed of great interest to many people. Because the more notifications that come in, the more calls or messages that come in.

Besides being used to send personal messages to phone contacts, WA also provides a group feature that can accommodate hundreds of members to share or get information simultaneously. For example, class groups, alumni groups, organizational groups, work groups, study groups, and so on. Communication that exists in the WA group, of course, uses the medium of language. Kridalaksana & Kentjono (in Chaer, 2014: 32) define language as a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by members of social groups to work together , communicate, and identify themselves. In order for the relationship between fellow group members to be well established, it is necessary to have an understanding of the rules or rules by group users in communicating.

In connection with the above, if the linguistic rules are violated by the speaker, it will cause a negative impression or response from the partner, such as being impolite, unethical, selfish, arrogant, and so on. Furthermore, speech that is not polite has the potential to hurt the partner's heart. As Markhamah (2011: 153) mentions politeness in language as a way used by speakers in communicating so that the interlocutor does not feel pressured or offended. In WA groups, *jokes are often found* that can make users smile themselves. However, not all of these utterances were well received by other group members. Sometimes a speech is intended to entertain others, but the impression actually threatens the *face* of the interlocutor. Therefore, in language it is very important to pay attention to the politeness aspect. Speaking well and politely is one way for speakers to respect their interlocutors.

Language politeness is one of the studies of pragmatics. Ellen (2006) asserts that politeness in language is one of the more popular branches of contemporary pragmatics and is a widely used tool in sharing studies of intercultural communication. While pragmatics is the study of the meaning conveyed by the speaker to the interlocutor that is adapted to the context of the speech (Yule, 2014: 3). Furthermore, Yule (2014:4) states that the context in question relates to who is the speaker, what is being discussed, to whom the speech is delivered, and where the conversation takes place. The concept emphasizes that language politeness is related to the way the speaker considers the speech he conveys by seeing or adjusting who his interlocutor is.

One way to know a person's character can be seen from his speech. Supported by Pranowo (2012: 3) states that a person's personality can be measured through language acts, both verbal and nonverbal language. Even in the Al-Quran and Hadith, the teachings of politeness have been emphasized to be followed (Pardi, 2014: 97). His nature is classified as polite when the use of language is good, polite, gentle and respects his interlocutor. If explored further, the characteristics of polite language are generally owned by women. Coupled with previous studies which state that women generally ask more questions, use more polite speech and interrupt conversations less than men. This shows that the gender differences of speakers can be distinguished through their speech.

As Gradol & Swan (2003:2) explain that the difference in the form of speech for men and women is a marker of gender differences in a conversation.

Catalan (2003:55) mentions that men hear less and speak less than women. But in fact, from the results of the research, the author found that men actually spoke more in the WA group than women. The researcher assumes that this happens because women are more concerned about the feelings of their interlocutors, afraid of speaking wrongly which will make their partners offended and misunderstood. As DeVito (2000:22) states that men are more assertive and courageous in communicating, while women are more permissive or shy and afraid . Saleh (2017: 146) also explains that, women tend to interact in ways that will maintain and increase solidarity, while men tend to interact in ways that will maintain and increase their power and status. So it is not surprising that there are often arguments between men in the WA group.

Therefore, this study is here to describe the male language politeness strategies in the WA group. The WA groups that were selected as data collection sites in this study were the alumni/bachelor group (hereinafter abbreviated as GA) and the class/student group (hereinafter abbreviated as GK). Substantially, the difference between the two groups lies in age and level of education. GA members or users have a higher age and education level than GK members or users. This study will show male language politeness strategies based on age and education level. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the politeness theory of Brown & SC Levinson (1987). Brown & Levinson divides four politeness strategies that can be used in communication. The four politeness strategies are as follows:

1. Strategy Frankly / Without Strategy ( *Bald Record Strategy* )

This strategy is chosen if a speaker performs a speech act as it is or without further ado. The speaker does not make any effort to minimize the threat to the face of the interlocutor or to reduce the impact of FTA. This strategy was chosen by considering: a) the speaker and the speech partner both know the importance of an internal behavior, b) the danger of face threat is very small, c) the speaker has much more power than the speech partner.

2. Positive Politeness Strategy ( *Positive Politeness Strategy* )

This strategy is used to show intimacy to the interlocutor who is not someone close to the speaker. To facilitate the interaction, the speaker tries to give the impression of having the same fate and as if he has the same desire as the interlocutor and is considered a shared desire that is really wanted together as well. This strategy also serves to launch social relationships with other people. With this strategy, the speaker shows that he wants to be more familiar with the interlocutor. This strategy tries to minimize the distance between the speaker and the interlocutor by expressing attention and intimacy. Thus, speakers can minimize FTA. Positive politeness strategies are realized in fifteen ways or actions as follows:

(1) Focusing on the interlocutor,
(2) Giving more attention, giving recognition or sympathy to the interlocutor,
(3) Intensify attention to the interlocutor,
(4) Using markers of group intimacy,
(5) find a deal,
(6) avoid conflict,
(7) Equating assumptions into public opinion,
(8) joke,
(9) Adding or agreeing to the opinion of the interlocutor,
(10) Offer help or promise,
(11) be optimistic,
(12) Involving speakers and interlocutors in activities,
(13) Give or ask for a specific reason,
(14) Assumes or performs an action,
(15) Give gifts.

3. ( *Negative Politeness Strategy* )

This strategy refers to a speech strategy that shows the existence of social distance between the speaker and the speech partner. Gunarwan (2007: 105) suggests that language strategies are intimately interpreted as shortening the social distance between speakers and speech partners. Therefore, speaking intimately is one of the characteristics of positive politeness. On the other hand, speaking in a formal manner shows social distance, so it is called negative politeness. This politeness strategy is realized in ten ways or actions, as follows:

(1) Indirectly stating,
(2) Ask questions or dodge,

(3) Be pessimistic,
(4) Minimize the demand load,
(5) Humble themselves,
(6) Apologize,
(7) Personalization of speakers and interlocutors,
(8) Placing face-threatening acts as a generally accepted rule,
(9) Nominalization,
(10) State clearly that the actions of the interlocutor are very valuable to the speaker.

4. Politeness Strategy Vaguely or indirectly ( *Off The Record Politeness Strategy* )

This strategy is carried out in a disguised way or does not describe a clear communicative intent. This choice is made when the speaker feels it is inappropriate to state his meaning clearly and let the hearer grope his meaning by doing his own interpretation. There are 15 ways to do this strategy:

(1) Signaling
(2) Provide relevant instructions
(3) Prejudice
(4) Minimize the situation
(5) Exaggerating the situation
(6) Using tautology
(7) Using contradictory expressions
(8) Using ironic expressions
(9) Using metaphors
(10) Using rhetorical questions
(11) Using ambiguous expressions
(12) Using unclear expressions
(13) Using overly general expressions
(14) Not placing the interlocutor properly
(15) Use incomplete or elliptical expressions.

The author's search results through the *Google Scholar application* by typing the keyword "Gender Language Politeness in Social Media" show that so far no one has studied language politeness in relation to gender in social media, especially WA media. This makes this research important to do. This research is important to study because it is to see the language politeness strategies used by men in the WA group based on age and level of education. Thus, this article can be used as feedback to the community, especially men, regarding the selection of polite language, to parents to introduce polite language development to children from childhood, both boys and girls. The purpose of this article is to classify male language politeness strategies on WA social media.

Although there is no similar research, it is necessary to include references related to research on gender-based language politeness. Research conducted by Rasyid (2018) with the title Gender-Based Language Politeness Analysis in Indonesian Language Learning Interactions at SMA Negeri 6 Sidenreng Rappang. The results of Rasyid's research (2018) found that male students more often obeyed the principle of politeness in language to female teachers compared to male teachers and more often deviated from male teachers than female teachers. Meanwhile, female students more often comply with the principle of politeness in language to female teachers than male teachers and more often deviate from male teachers than female teachers.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Santoso (2013) with the title Code and Politeness in Office Meetings with a Gender and Position Perspective. The results of the study found that the realization of language politeness, both meeting leaders and male meeting participants in TTD (dictive speech acts) tended to use direct speech acts, whereas female leaders or meeting participants tended to use TTD indirectly with interrogative mode. Both studies show that the level of politeness in language for women is higher than that of men.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The type of research used is pragmatic research with a qualitative approach. The research population is all male speech in conversations in the WA group. The groups where the data was collected were the alumni/graduate group (hereinafter abbreviated as GA) and the class/student group (abbreviated as GK). The sampling technique used *was purposive sampling* . The data analysis technique is processed based on the stages of Miles & Saldana (2014:14) with the following stages: a) coding based on politeness characteristics indicators, b) coding based on politeness indicators, c) calculating the frequency of occurrence of each politeness strategy, d) interpretation of politeness strategies in male language -male in the WA group.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The discussion regarding the use of language politeness strategies used by men in the WA group will be discussed below:

**1. Frank Strategy**

a. Question

The results showed that the use of frank politeness strategies in the form of questions was the most widely used strategy by men in GC conversations, whereas in GA conversations men rarely used frank strategies in the form of questions. This shows that in GK, men have a fairly high curiosity. As Izzaty & Ayrizah (2008) stated that the criteria for early adulthood are having a lot of time to hang out and being more intellectually challenged by academic assignments. A person in GK is generally in early adulthood or growing up, namely the age of 18 to 25 years. So it is not surprising that they have high spirits, let alone academic problems. Examples of the use of frank politeness strategies in the form of questions by men in WA group conversations can be seen in the data below. Each speech: male speech in GA **(1)** and male speech in GK **(2)**.

**(1).** A: *Mat, masih dihumas* ? (*Mat, are you still in public relations*?)

**(2).** B: *Ndak dtgko* ? ( didn't you come?)

The two utterances above are included in the frank politeness strategy. The two of them asked directly without using preamble. Speech B which is a speech in the GK conversation uses the pronoun " *ko* " which means you show that they have a close relationship with their friends. So the use of the pronoun " *ko* " at the same age shows a close relationship. It's different when using " *ko* " on the other person with an older age is a form of someone's impoliteness in Bugis-Makassar culture.

b.  Reign

The results showed that the use of frank politeness strategies in the form of commands was mostly done by men in GK conversations. This shows that men in GK have a *bossy nature* , namely: likes to rule and manage others. In addition, it also shows that men in GK who are in early adulthood still have a selfish nature because they still like to command others. An example of using male politeness strategies in the form of commands in the WA group. Each utterance: GA (3) and GK (4).

**(3).** A : *Ttip salam sama pak Uki. (Say hello to Mr. Uki.)*

**(4).** B: *Dtgko anak" kah siangji juga!* ( you have to come, during the day)

The two utterances above are included in the frank politeness strategy. Both ruled directly without using preamble before ordering. Hafid (2022:42) states that pleasantries or markers when ordering are very important so that the command

can be received well by the speech partner. Furthermore, Hafid (2022:43) mentions that the politeness markers are *tabek* (sorry). Thus the speech is considered impolite. As Leech (1983: 25) states that the more direct an utterance is, the less polite it is. And the more indirect an utterance is, the more polite the utterance will be.

C. Invite

The results showed that the use of frank politeness strategies in the form of invitations was equally dominant used by men in GA and GK conversations. This shows that men tend to like to invite. An example of using a male politeness strategy is to invite men to join a WA group. Each utterance: GA (5) and GK (6).

**(5).** A : *Ayo kk Hatta, masuk maki kota* (come on, Hatta, go to the city)

**(5).** B: *Ayo buruan (Come on, hurry up )*.

**(6).** C: *Ayok pergi nonton film minion (Let's go watch a minion movie)*

**(6).** D: *ayok deh pergi nonton pengabdi setan 2. (Come on, let's go watch Pengabdi Setan 2)*

The four utterances above are included in the frank politeness strategy. This is indicated by the use of direct utterances using the lingual "come on" marker. These four utterances can be said to be less polite because they seem to invite by forcing without giving a choice to the partner.

**2.  Positive Politeness Strategy**

a. Joke

The results showed that the use of positive politeness strategies in the form of jokes was mostly used by men in GK conversations. Whereas in GA conversations, it is very rare to find the use of politeness strategies in the form of jokes. This shows that the men in the GK conversation who are in early adulthood and are studying in college have a fairly high sense of humor. Even if it's a *joke* sometimes sounds less polite, but it is a way of showing intimacy to the interlocutor. Thus, the use of politeness strategies in the form of jokes is one way to strengthen friendships. This is in line with Suryadi's opinion (2019:14) which states that friendship will increase when someone can display humor in their association. Furthermore, Suryadi (2019:14) explained that besides being able to strengthen friendship and brotherhood, humor can also create an atmosphere. Examples of the use of positive politeness strategies in the form of jokes in GA and GK conversations can be seen in the

following data: GA **(7)** and GK **(8)** utterances respectively .

**(7).** A : *Yang mana lagi Nahradi? Yang pendek to? (Which one is Nahradi? The short one right?)*

In the context of the speech above, a woman in GA asked Nahradi. The woman says *can we forget* you (have you been able to forget me). From the woman's speech, A responded by using a humiliating technique of humour. This can be seen in A's speech. *Which one is Nahradi? The short one, right?* A called Nahradi a short figure. The utterance can make other people offended, because it has been included in the act of *body shaming* . An act of criticizing or humiliating someone by making ridicule or negative comments about someone's body shape or size. However, because there is a close relationship between Nahradi and A , A 's utterance is only a joke in the GA.

**(8).** B: *Nassami Fahmi itu oi, sepatunya sama mace tawwa.* (*Of course that is Fahmi, his shoes are the same as Mace have)*

In the context of the story above, someone sent a photo of Fahmi walking with a woman. The photo elicited various responses. One of the responses using a humiliating humor technique is that B utterences by said *of course that is Fahmi, the shoes are the same as Moms used.* It can be seen from B's speech which states that the woman who is with Fahmi is a *Mace.* The meaning of the word *mace* in KBBI is ma.ce [n] makcik; father's or mother's sister. B assumes that the woman who is with Fahmi is a mother. This means that the woman is older than Fahmi and their other friends. Even though the woman is Fahmi's own boyfriend who is the same age or younger than Fahmi. B's utterance has the potential to offend others, but because B and Fahmi are close friends, B's utterance becomes a laughing stock in the GK.

b. Identity

The results showed that the use of positive politeness strategies in the form of identity was equally dominant for men in GA and GK. Men's conversations in GA and GK both use various forms of greeting to show their identity. This shows that it is sufficient for men to maintain a relationship of solidarity and intimacy with their speech partners marked by the use of the form of greeting. In line with Suhandra (2014:108) states that one of the functions of using the form of greeting is as a marker of close relationships and markers of affectionate relationships.

Examples of the use of positive politeness strategies in the form of positive politeness strategies in the form of identity in GA and GK conversations can be seen in the following data. Each utterance: GA **(9)** and GK **(10).**

**(9).** A : *adakah main tennis **bosku.** (is there anyone to play tennis , **boss?)***

**(10).** B: *karena kita kan **bestie.** (because we are both **bestie)***

The two utterances above are positive politeness strategies in the form of identity. This is indicated by the use of greetings in both utterances. In conversation, GA uses the greeting "boss" while in conversation, GK uses the greeting "bestie". The use of this form of greeting as a marker of a closed relationship with the speech partner.

C. Attention

The results showed that the use of positive politeness strategies in the form of attention was more widely used by men in GA conversations than in GC conversations. This shows that men in GA have a higher level of concern than men in GK. Although the caring nature is more attached to the feminine gender role, the masculine gender role is less responsive to things related to feelings. But in reality, men also have a caring attitude. This is in line with Dwiyono (2009: 5) which states that the roles of men and women are interchangeable. Men can play the role of gentle, emotional and loving people. On the other hand, at certain times, women can also be mighty, rational, and act as leaders.

Examples of the use of positive politeness strategies in the form of positive politeness strategies in the form of attention in GA and GK conversations can be seen in the following data. Each utterance: GA **(11)** and GK **(12).**

**(11).** A: *Oh begitu, kita doakan Pak Aris sehat, sukses spy lancar ini apa2.* (*Oh I see, we pray for Mr. Aris to be healthy, succes so this everything will then running smoothly!)*

In the context of the speech above, A questions the *durian* fruit in the area where Jusman lives. However, where Jusman lives there are no *durian* trees and mentions that it is Aris's village where there are many *durians*. Jusman's answer then made A pay attention to Aris by stating " *Oh I see, we pray for Mr. Aris to be healthy, succes so this everything will then running smoothly* " A 's form of concern for Aris is by inviting their other friends to pray for Aris to be healthy and successful. With his health and success, Aris was able to make A and his

other friends able to visit Aris's village to harvest *durian* fruit.

**(12).** *B: semangat vik, eh yul (Keep spirit vik's, eh I mean yul.)*

The context of the speech above, someone sent a photo of Yul carrying out a proposal seminar exam to the GK. B showed his concern for Yul by giving the spirit of " *Keep spirit vik's, eh I mean yul.)"* . The beginning of B's speech gives encouragement to Vik, then it is corrected and directed back to Yul. B's utterance shows that he cares not only for Yul, who is currently taking the proposal exam, but also for Vik to encourage him to take the exam as soon as possible, like Yul and his other friends.

### 3. Negative Politeness Strategy
a. Apologize

The results showed that the negative politeness strategy of apologizing was used the most in GA conversations than in GK conversations. GA is a wa group whose members are alumni of study programs at universities. That is, members in GA are those who have obtained a bachelor's degree. In general, a bachelor is at the age of 24 years and over. This indicates that at that age , a person has been able to control emotions well, not only selfish but also thinking about the feelings of others. This is in line with Jannah (2021:123) which states that adulthood is a time of shifting egocentricity into empathy.

Examples of using negative politeness strategies in the form of apologizing in GA and GK conversations can be seen in the following data. Each speech: GA **(13)** and GK **(14).**

**(13).** *A : Selamat kakak Nurtamin dan istri. **Maaf** ndk bisa hadir lagi diluar kota. (Congratulations my brother Nurtamin and wife. **Sorry** I can't attend yours, now being outside the city .*

In the context of the speech above, Nurtamin entered his wedding invitation into GA. A did not have time to attend Nurtamin's wedding because he was out of town. The strategy of apologizing can be seen from A 's utterance by using the lingual "sorry" indicating that A regrets not attending the event because he is out of town. The use of the word "brother" in A 's speech is a greeting that shows A's respect for the speech partner.

**(14).** *B: **Sory**, bro masih di tanah merah ka. (**Sorry** bro, I am still in Tanah Merah)*

In the context of the speech above, V invites his friends in GK to go out for the weekend. B

refuses V's invitation by mentioning ***Sory*** , *bro, I am still in Tanah Merah?*. Rejection made by B is included in the indirect rejection by using the word sorry " **sory** ". Speech B by using the word sorry indicates that the speaker respects the interlocutor to reduce the degree of threat the speech partner faces for his refusal.

b. Be thankful

The results showed that the negative politeness strategy in the form of thanking was used the most in GA conversations than in GK conversations. This shows that men in GA are more appreciative and appreciative of what is said or given by their partner. This is in line with Allen (2001:2) which states that the expression of gratitude in daily communication is one example of the many politeness strategies used by humans in order to cultivate and maintain social relationships.

Examples of using negative politeness strategies in the form of gratitude in GA and GK conversations can be seen in the following data. Each speech: GA **(15)** and GK **(16).**

**(15).** *A : terima kasih saudaraku semua atas doa dan perhatianta.(Thank you all brothers and sisters for your prayers and concern)*

**(16).** *B: makasih bossku Dendi. (thanks my boss Dendi.)*

The two utterances above are included in negative politeness strategies. This is indicated by the use of the words "*terima kasih and Makasih*". The utterance shows that the speaker feels happy and grateful for what the interlocutor has done or said to him.

C. Question

The results of the study indicate that the use of negative politeness strategies is in the form of questions that begin with greetings *Assalamualaikum* and the word *tabe'* is only used by men in GA conversations. Examples of using negative politeness strategies in the form of questions in GA conversation **(17)** can be seen in the following data.

**(17).** *A: Assalamualaikum...tabe mau bertanya..mungkin ada yang tau jalur Mandiri Unhas testnya kapan dan tanggal berapa ya...terima kasih. (Assalamualaikum... Sorry wants to ask .. maybe someone knows the Mandiri Unhas test route, when and on what date... thank you.)*

The above statement uses a negative politeness strategy. This can be seen from what starts with

greetings and the use of the word *tabe'* which means "excuse me".

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion above, it shows that male conversations in GK tend to use frank politeness strategies and positive politeness strategies. Whereas in GA, men tend to use positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. This shows that the speech of men in GK tends to be less polite, especially if the interlocutor has close social distance with him. While in GA conversations, male speech tends to be more polite seen from the choice of using language politeness strategies. Men's utterances in GA conversations seem to rarely use frank politeness strategies even though their interlocutors have close social distances with them. This shows that the more mature a person is, the more careful they are in issuing speech forms. This is also inseparable from the education factor.

Another finding shows that the politeness strategy, in the form of inviting men alike, is carried out by men in GA and GK. This shows that men have the instinct to invite first than women. Furthermore, men in GK do not use negative politeness strategies at all in the form of questions that begin with greetings and *tabe'* .

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