

Politeness Strategies in the *Hempang Batang Pantun*: The Traditional Wedding Ceremony Sequence in *Resam Melayu Deli*

Elvi Syahrin
Universitas Negeri Medan

syahrin@unimed.ac.id

Introduction

Politeness is a phenomenon that defines the appropriateness and one's conformity with the required social and linguistic norms in a speech community. This "key of interaction" seems to be an important device in order to carry out successful communication. Brown & Levinson (1987) argue that politeness means acting so as to take account of the feelings of others and includes both those actions concerned with "positive face" (the wish to be approved) and "negative face" (the wish to be unimpeded, free from imposition, or left alone). Face can be lost, maintained, or enhanced. Thus, politeness implies the act of maintaining face. One can lose his face when behaving in a way which is not consistent with the expected behavior associated with one's face. For example, a *Telangkat Adat* in Malay tradition is supposed to talk and behave wisely and respectfully in accordance with his role in the community. He would lose his face, once he behaves differently or violates social norms.

Politeness is generally associated with indirectness (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Searle, 1979; Leech, 1983). The more indirectly the speech act is realized, the more polite it is considered. This indirect way of speaking is inherently practiced by the Malays. In everyday interaction with others, the Malays choose to deliver their intentions or messages in indirect ways, especially if the rank of the message is in considerably high. This kind of indirectness can be seen in the deliverance of pantun or poems which are often practiced in Malay traditional ceremonies, including in the traditional wedding ceremony of the community of Melayu Deli.

Pantun as one of the traditional Malay literary works generally contains the values and philosophy of life of the Malays. Pantun is one of the most famous and most dominant literary genres in Malay culture. Through pantun, communication is conveyed aesthetically and culturally (Dja'far, F.M., 2005). Thus, pantun is employed as a means to show politeness and Malay culture.

Pantun in *Hempang Batang* as one of the 27 sequences in the wedding ceremony of Melayu Deli becomes quite important to be discussed in the present study since it is considerably less and less practiced in most wedding ceremonies of Melayu Deli. The possible reason of its disappearance may be caused by the rarity of *Telangkat* (spokesman).

Picture 1: Welcoming groom in the session of Hempang Batang
(<https://ichwankalimasada.wordpress.com>)



Being one of tools to show politeness, pantun is bound by some generic rules. It consists of four lines in each stanza, lines one and two are *sampiran* (introduction) and lines three and four are *isi* (message or objective) of pantun, which in this study refers to various speech acts.

Examples:

- (1) *Impal larangan menghempang pintu,
Bahu membahu berbanjar-banjar;
Menuntut bahagian adat dahulu,
Rela berkorban kalau dilanggar.*

(we), bride's brothers block the gate,
hand in hand making line;
claiming the tradition enforcement,
willingly sacrifice ourselves upon trespass

- (2) *Kami tak mau calak berbuat bukan perintah dari pak Camat,
Bukan bapak Lurah memberi mandat tapi pemuda kampung telah sepakat;
Kalau pengantin mau lewat harus pakai syarat,
Kalau tidak, berjemur sampai jam empat.*

We do not want to be arrogant (because) it is not a request of District head,
nor request of sub-District head but the agreement of local youth;
(that) there is a condition for groom to enter (the place),
if it is not obeyed, (you) are let to get sunburn until 4 p.m.

The pantun above is set of pantun traditionally delivered in Humpang Batang by Telangkai Adat as spokesman of the bride together with Impal (young brothers or sisters of the bride) in the wedding ceremony of Melayu Deli. Both sets of pantun used positive politeness strategy that is directed to the addressee's positive face. Interestingly, the two pantun use different sub-strategies of politeness.

In example 1, the message from Telangkai of the bride is actually an explanation of why Humpang Batang (gate blocking) has to be executed. The message can be seen clearly in the section of *isi* (message). The strategy used in this speech act is a positive politeness strategy in which the speaker uses the sub-strategy of avoiding disagreement by explaining the act of blocking the gate. Telangkai tells the reason that is based on traditional rules.

In contrast, the pantun in example 2 uses the sub-strategy of joke. The part in pantun in which speaker will let the groom's family wait until get sunburnt if they do not obey the conditions made by local youth, indicates that he wants to 'come closer' to the hearer, in this case, the family of groom. Jokes are intended to entertain the audiences since the tradition of *berkelakar* (joking) is a part of Melayu Deli culture.

Although the use of pantun in traditional Malay ceremonies is hardly recognized by the present generation, it is still found in the wedding ceremony of the community of Melayu Deli. However the way the pantun is delivered at present seems to change gradually, reflecting the changing world that could lead to differing politeness strategies used.

The present study aims to determine the strategies used in the Humpang Batang pantun by using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. This study is conducted not only as one of effort to preserve the customs of pantun deliverance in the marriage tradition of Humpang Batang, but also to describe the politeness strategy used by Telangkai in the ceremony. By identifying the strategies used, it is hoped that we can obtain a clear picture of politeness in the pantun of Melayu Deli, especially during Humpang Batang. This can accordingly generate interest among the young generation of Melayu Deli.

Methodology

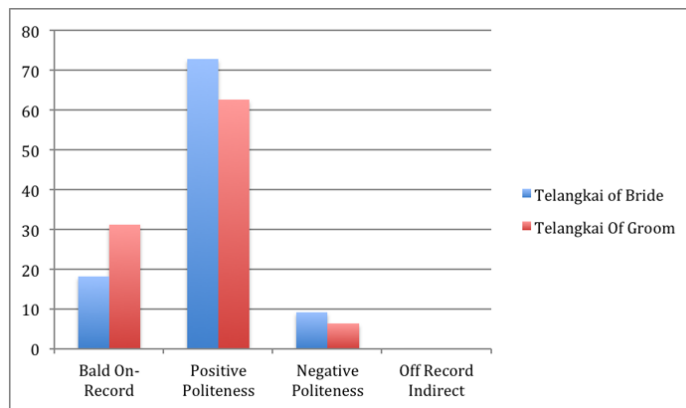
The study is a qualitative research using the method of record keeping. The source of data is the speech of Telangkai in the form of pantun taken from Youtube "*Resepsi Pernikahan Adat Melayu*" by Donny and Frida, published on January 28, 2015. Originally, there are three sessions of the sequence of wedding ceremony of Melayu Deli, namely Humpang Batang, Humpang Pintu, and Humpang Kipas. However only the data from Humpang Batang was chosen to be analyzed.

The data is analyzed by using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. Although the theory has received a lot of criticism because of the universality of its claims, nevertheless it is considered relevant for the present study since the theory proposes concrete strategies for politeness in everyday interaction.

Result

Overall, 27 pantun are obtained; 11 pantun from Telangkai of Bride, and 16 pantun of Telangkai of groom. The distribution of strategies used can be seen in Figure 1.

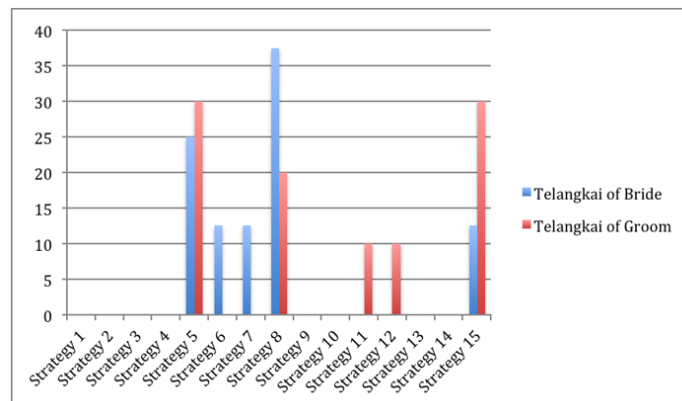
Figure 1: Politeness strategy used by Telangkai during Hempang Batang



The figure shows the use of Positive politeness strategy, Bald On-Record Strategy, and Negative politeness strategy by both Telangkai. Among the three politeness strategies, both Telangkai mostly prefer Positive politeness. Surprisingly, the use of Negative politeness as an indication of indirectness is considerably low. The strategy of Off Record is not present.

Although there is a preference to use Positive politeness among both the Telangkai, the sub-strategies are varied. Out of 15 sub-strategies, there are only 7 sub-strategies used by both of Telangkai. Telangkai of Bride tends to use the strategy of joke, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, presupposing, and cooperation. While Telangkai of Groom choose seeking agreement, cooperation, joking, being optimistic, and including both speaker and hearer in the activity. It can be seen that both Telangkai share preferences of the sub-strategies of joke, seeking agreement and cooperation, as shown at Figure 2.

Figure 2: The sub-strategy of Positive politeness used by Telangkai during Hempang Batang



Strategy	Sub-strategy of Positive Politeness
1	Notice or attend to Hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods
2	Exaggerate interest, approval, or sympathy with hearer
3	Intensify interest to hearer, exaggerate facts, tell stories in present tense
4	Use in-group identity markers
5	Seek agreement: select safe topics on which agreement is expected
6	Avoid disagreement
7	Presuppose, raise, and assert common ground
8	Joke

9	Assert or presuppose knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants
10	Offer, promise
11	Be optimistic
12	Include both speaker and hearer in the activity
13	Give or request reasons
14	Assume or assert reciprocity
15	Give gifts to hearer: Sympathy, understanding, cooperation, goods

Discussion

The results bring insights about politeness strategies used in pantun. While pantun is well-known for its indirectness by the presence of “*lampiran*” in each of its form, it does not mean that it is greatly dominated by the use of Negative politeness strategy which performs the function of minimizing a particular imposition of FTA (Face-threatening Act) unavoidable effects. Many of the pantun contain an attempt to loose the hearer's face, that, even delivered in the form of jokes seems relatively rude. The high presence of Bald On-Record confirms the assumption that most of the pantun contains more impolite than polite speech acts.

Nevertheless, this particular use of positive politeness in pantun during Humpang Batang shows that both Telangkai try to reduce the awkwardness between the two group of speakers by the intense use of joke (*berkelakar*) that is used in Malay culture, especially in Melayu Deli culture. This is one way to minimize distance and to show friendliness between the bride's and groom's families.

Conclusion

There are three politeness strategies used in the pantun in Humpang Batang where positive politeness strategy is the most used strategy by both Telangkai. Although there is a preference to use positive politeness by both Telangkai, the sub-strategies are varied. In line with that, it is found that joke as one of the positive politeness strategies palys an important role in the Humpang Batang pantun.

References

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Appendix

Notice or attend to Hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods

No.	<i>Speech of Telangkai of Bride</i>	<i>Speech of Telangkai of Groom</i>
1	<i>Beriring balam beserta korbah, Balam berlalu korbah pun mati ; Seiring salam beserta sembah, Sembah menyusun sepuluh jari.</i>	<i>Kalau pergi tepian rawa, Sair indah lagu melantun ; Karena mempelai pria suku Jawa, MCnya harus berpantun.</i>
2	<i>Silat berung namanya kampung, Tempat lahirnya Laksamana Hang Tuah ; Silat telaga sambung menyambung, Menyambut pengantin acara bertambah meriah.</i>	<i>Kalau berlayar tepian seb(e)rang, Arah menuju tepian paloh ; Datang bukan sembarang datang, Kami datang dari Limapuluh.</i>
3	<i>Terbang tinggi si burung Pipit, Ditembak mati di kala pagi ; Yang nonton harap jauh sedikit, Karena kalau kenak dari kami tak ada asuransi.</i>	<i>Kekek ikan Belanak ikan, Di bawah tempayan ikan gulama ; Sebelum acara kita mulakan, Sambut salam pembuka kata.</i>
4	<i>Lain lubuk lain ikannya, Lain ladang lain belalang ; Perahu layar haluan retak Jangan diinjak di tepian rusak, Di mano bumi tuan pijak Disiko langit tuan junjuang.</i>	<i>Muara sungai sangatlah dalam, Kapal merapat di kala senja ; Sambut ramai besar salam, Sebagai awal acara kita.</i>
5	<i>Angkuik-agkuik kumbang di langik, Alun tibo melayang-layang ; Tetangkuk bumi dan langit, Adat di mato indaklah hilang.</i>	<i>Lancang kuning berlayar malam, Arah menuju tepian mandi ; Barang siapa yang tak mengucapkan salam, Kita doakan suaminya kawin lagi.</i>
6	<i>Hempang batang hampang perdana, Dijaga ketat 2 pemuda ; Yang 1 gagah 1 perkasa, Mewakili pemuda setempat ini.</i>	<i>Di hari yang cerah beserta indah, Kiranya kedatangan kami membawa tuah ; Berbicara sebagai penyambung lidah, Mengatasnamakan Bapak Supono pemberi amanah, Kirenya pertemuan kita membawa tuah.</i>
7	<i>Kalau pergi ke tepian hilir, Arah menuju kuala lumpur ; Kalau abang ini jurusannya bagian parkir, dan abang ini bagian dapur.</i>	<i>Kabar-berkabar ke tanah Deli, Tanah yang sama kita cintai ; Adat budaya dijunjung tinggi, Jadi warisan ke anak negeri.</i>
8	<i>Kami tak mau calak berbuat, Bukan perintah dari pak camat ; Bukan bapak lurah member mandat, Tapi pemuda kampung telah sepakat Kalau pengantin mau lewat harus pakai syarat, Kalau tidak berjemur sampai jam 4.</i>	<i>Hati-hati titi diinjak, Selamat badan sampai penghujung ; Di mana bumi dipijak, Di situ pule langit dijunjung.</i>
9	<i>Petik-petik si buah Manggis, Petik anak di kota karo ; Pengantin kami tak mungkin menangis, Bisa diganti dengan tukang foto.</i>	<i>Tabek datuk tabek raja, tabek-tabek tuan penentu adat ; Kami datang tiba di darat, Membawa pengantin kaum kerabat, Sampai di sini dengan selamat, Disambut pula secara adat.</i>

10	<p><i>Jika si batang si kayu nangka, Dibuat peti bawa ke lampung ; Hempang batang hendak tuan buka, Syarat upeti same preman kampung.</i></p>	<p><i>Kami datang penuh janji, Belum tahu adat negri ; Yang kanan kayak Adam Jordan, Yang kiri kaya Thomas Jorgi, Merengut ke kanan dan kekiri, apakah maksud hampangan ini?</i></p>
11	<p><i>Anak kecil memakai selop, Di pagi hari, berarak awan dikaki bukit ; Kalok saya liat tuan memegang amplop, Persis seperti tuan kredit.</i></p>	<p><i>Kalau pergi ke Tanjung Pura, Sampai di sana haripun senja ; Kalau boleh kami bertanya, Mengape penjaga tuan satu pakai batik satu pakai kemeja ?</i></p>
12	-----	<p><i>Layang-layang menyambang buih Batang meranti cabang bertingkat ; Pagar melintang, pagar berdingding, Mohon kami batang diangkat.</i></p>
13		<p><i>1,2,3, dan 4, Dare menari sambil melompat ; Betulkah ini tuntutan adat, Apakah tuan yang buat-buat?</i></p>
14		<p><i>Kalau pergi ke kota Stabat, Petikkan kami si buah manggis ; Kalau pangeran kami berdiri sampai jam 4, Tuan, putri tuan nanti menangis.</i></p>
15		<p><i>Kalau digantang boleh digantang, Disukat boleh disukat ; Kalau kita tentang terlalu panjang, Elok kita persingkat</i></p>
16		<p><i>Tanjung Tiram di Batubara, Lima dara serta istana ; Paham kami yang tuan site, Usah kasih kunci telah tersedia</i></p>