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Politeness Strategies In Ustadz Hanan Attaki'S Islamic Preaching: A Pragmatic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the politeness strategies used by Ustadz Hanan Attaki (UHA) in Islamic preaching YouTube video on the topic of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). It aims to identify the types of politeness strategies used and explain their functions in preaching communication. This research employs a pragmatic approach with a descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected from the transcript of a preaching video published on Ustadz Hanan Attaki's official YouTube channel and analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The findings reveal four politeness strategies in 110 utterances: positive politeness (50 data points; 45,5%), bald-on-record (35 data points; 31,8%), negative politeness (15 data points; 13,6%), off-record (10 data points; 9,1%). Positive politeness is the dominant strategy, primarily realized through inclusive expressions, friendly forms of address, humour, and expressions of solidarity. Meanwhile, bald-on-record is used to deliver direct religious guidance, negative politeness minimizes imposition, and off-record encourages reflection through indirect expressions. The study concludes that politeness strategies play an important role in establishing solidarity, maintaining harmonious relationships, and delivering Islamic messages persuasively and respectfully.

Introduction

In communication, politeness is an important aspect in creating positive outcomes between speakers and hearers. Politeness strategies are used to show greater respect for others as well as for oneself. We cannot always express utterances politely in everyday communication; doing so otherwise may hurt the feelings of the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are used by speakers to avoid acts that threaten

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the hearer's face. Such face-threatening acts are referred to by Brown and Levinson (1987: 60) as FTA (Face-Threatening Act).

Communication is an activity that commonly occurs within a social context. It is carried out to interact with a particular purpose, such as having conversations, preaching, sharing information, and so forth. Basically, when communicating, speakers and hearers should pay attention to politeness in language as a form of courtesy toward one another. Therefore, politeness in language is highly necessary in everyday conversation. Furthermore, Omar et al. (2018: 2) state, "Politeness is defined as showing a respectful behaviour for others. Expressions such as 'thank you', 'please' and 'you are welcome' show politeness and etiquettes of the western culture; in Arab culture, the politeness is reflected in giving respect to elders, greeting people, and helping the needy."

Long before theories of politeness were developed, Islam had already explained the importance of politeness in language. Such explanations can be found in several verses of the Qur'an, including *Qaulan Sadida* (Qur'an. An-Nisa:9), which means communicating correctly, both in terms of the content and the linguistic medium used. Second, *Qaulan Ma'rufa* (Qur'an. An-Nisa:8), which means communicating using language that is pleasing to the heart and does not offend or hurt the feelings of the interlocutor, while meeting the criteria of truthfulness and honesty and containing neither lies nor pretence. Third, *Qaulan Baligha* (Qur'an. An-Nisa:63), which means communicating with expressions that are effective, reach the intended target and purpose, and leave an impression; in other words, speaking clearly, explicitly, appropriately, and effectively. Fourth, *Qaulan Masyura* (Qur'an. Al-Isra:28), which means communicating in a good and appropriate manner so that people do not feel disappointed. The Qur'an also explains that polite language is language expressed gently. This is stated in Qur'an At-Taha:44: "Then speak to him (Fir'awn) with gentle words, perhaps he may be reminded and fear to Allah." These principles of qaulan (speech) in the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic communication ethics, which emphasize honesty, politeness, clarity, and gentleness (Al layyinah & Nugroho, 2026; Efendi et al., 2025).

The concept of politeness is closely related to pragmatics. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness is fundamental to pragmatics because politeness is a highly universal phenomenon in the social use of language. This is also stated by Omar et al. (2018: 2): "Brown and Levinson (1987) have suggested that speakers employ politeness strategies in order to achieve successful communication and maintain social harmony." Politeness in

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religious discourse has been examined in studies of sermons, Islamic preaching, and digital religious expression. Migdadi et al. (2025), for example, report the prominence of positive politeness in Friday khutbahs, while Santoso et al. (2026) discuss negative politeness as a resource for negotiating authority in Indonesian Islamic preaching and building alignment with the audience. Studies of digital da'wah and social-media discourse have also examined humor, indirectness, and politeness in mediated religious expression (Atikoh & Ma'nawi, 2025; Nanda, 2023; Daulay et al., 2025, 2026). Recent pragmatic studies of Islamic preaching have also examined speech acts, politeness strategies, and the role of authority in mediated religious communication (Adib, 2025; Pratama, 2026; Zulfan et al., 2025). These studies establish that politeness is relevant across religious and digital contexts; however, the present study differs in its focus on the pragmatic choices within a recorded mosque sermon on FOMO delivered by Ustadz Hanan Attaki and subsequently distributed through YouTube. Its contribution is a context-sensitive account of how linguistic strategies combine religious authority, shared identity, exhortation, and respect for differences in one sermon. The chosen video data with the topic of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is also relevant to contemporary social experiences, particularly among younger generations who frequently encounter social comparison, anxiety, and concerns about social participation.

The theory used in this study is Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategy theory, which is divided into four strategies: the bald-on-record strategy, the positive politeness strategy, the negative politeness strategy, and the off-record strategy. The central concern of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is that politeness is used to save the face of both speakers and hearers, which is divided into positive face and negative face. Positive face is defined as the positive self-image that a person has, together with the desire to receive attention and approval. Negative face, meanwhile, refers to a person's basic claim to privacy, personal territory, and the right not to be disturbed. According to Brown and Levinson, positive politeness refers to satisfaction provided to the hearer. Speakers attempt to use good attitudes and utterances so that interlocutors feel satisfied and appreciated.

Brown and Levinson (1987) divide positive politeness into fifteen strategies: (1) noticing and attending to the hearer's needs or wants so that the speaker can accommodate what the hearer expects; (2) giving or showing greater appreciation or sympathy to the hearer; (3) intensifying interest; (4) using group identity markers, jargon, or slang; (5) seeking agreement; (6)

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avoiding disagreement or difference; (7) presupposing or asserting common ground; (8) joking; (9) asserting the speaker's knowledge and considering the hearer's wants; (10) offering and promising; (11) being optimistic; (12) including the hearer in the speech activity; (13) giving or asking for reasons; (14) assuming or asserting reciprocity; and (15) giving gifts.

Negative politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is a politeness strategy that expresses something indirectly to the hearer. There are ten negative politeness strategies: (1) being conventionally indirect; (2) asking questions to protect the hearer's value or autonomy; (3) being pessimistic; (4) minimizing imposition or pressure; (5) giving deference; (6) apologizing; (7) using passive constructions; (8) stating the face-threatening act as a general rule; (9) nominalizing; and (10) explicitly stating that the speaker is indebted to the hearer.

This study examines politeness strategies used by Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Lc., in a sermon on FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) delivered at a mosque in Bandung, West Java, and subsequently made available through his official YouTube channel. The analysis focuses on the linguistic strategies in the recorded sermon; YouTube is treated as the distribution and access medium, not as evidence that the original event was an online interaction. The study asks which politeness strategies occur in the sermon and what communicative functions can be interpreted from the utterances and their immediate discourse contexts.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach within a pragmatic framework to examine politeness strategies. The primary source is a Islamic preaching video by Ustadz Hanan Attaki on FOMO, published on 23 Jun 2023 at his official YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgQkT9k0Gbk. The vidoe has duration of 1 hour 23 minutes 10 seconds. The data are the preacher's utterances in the recorded mosque sermon that was accessed in 5 July 2025; the transcript provides the working text for analysis.

The researchers examined the transcript and identified utterances relevant to Brown and Levinson's four politeness-strategy categories. The researchers found that there were 110 uttearnces using Brown and Levonson strategies. The unit of analysis is an utterance interpreted together with its surrounding discourse. The authors considered some points as the rationale and criteria in selecting the video as the the research object are: First, the topic of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is relevant to contemporary social experiences,

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particularly among younger generations who frequently encounter social comparison, anxiety, and concerns about social participation. The discussion of FOMO within an Islamic preaching context provides an opportunity to examine how religious messages address contemporary social and psychological concerns through linguistic communication. Second, Ustadz Hanan Attaki is a prominent Islamic preacher whose preaching style is associated with contemporary religious communication and the use of accessible language. Third, the video provides naturally occurring linguistic data in the form of religious discourse. The utterances produced by the preacher offer opportunities to identify and analyze the realization of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies within an authentic communicative context.

The research was conducted through several systematic stages and coding process. The process involved collaborative review by the two authors. First, the transcript was examined repeatedly to identify relevant utterances, which were then classified according to Brown and Levinson's four politeness strategies: Bald-on-Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record. The initial classifications were subsequently reviewed by the second author with reference to the linguistic features, communicative functions, and contextual meanings of each utterance. Second, when differences in interpretation occurred, the authors discussed the relevant data and reconsidered the classification. Third, The final classifications were established through discussion and agreement. Fourth, the data were analysed using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Finally, the findings were interpreted and conclusions were drawn based on the results of the analysis.

Discussion

The video of Ustadz Hanan Attaki's FOMO had total 110 utterances as data containing politeness strategies. The data collection was taken from video transcript. Below is a table showing the research findings.

Table 1.
Politeness Strategies used in F O M O video

Politeness Strategy	Number	Percentage
Bald-on-Record	35	31,8%

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Positive Politeness	50	45,5%
Negative Politeness	15	13,6%
Off-Record	10	9,1%
TOTAL	**110**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that Positive Politeness is the most frequently used strategy, accounting for 50 out of 110 data (45,5%). This indicates that UHA frequently attempts to establish solidarity, closeness, and a sense of shared identity with the congregation. The use of inclusive expressions such as kita (we), forms of address such as teman-teman (friends), humour, sympathy, and expressions of agreement contribute to reducing the social distance between the preacher and the audience. This classification follows the research framework, which defines positive politeness as a strategy for establishing closeness, solidarity, agreement, and attention toward the hearer. This finding aligns with previous research on politeness in Islamic sermons, which found positive politeness to be the predominant strategy in promoting collective identity and mutual respect (Migdadi et al., 2025; Zikri et al., 2026).

The Bald-on-Record strategy accounts for 35 data (31,8%). This strategy is primarily found in direct instructions or direct religious guidance, such as commands to read the Qur'an, maintain good conduct, perform worship, or follow particular religious practices. In the preaching context, directness does not necessarily indicate impoliteness because it functions to provide clear religious guidance. This is consistent with findings that Indonesian preachers often use bald-on-record strategies to balance directness with respect for their audience (Wulansari, A., & Mazid, S., 2025).

Meanwhile, Negative Politeness accounts for 15 data (13.06%). Negative politeness is used when the preacher attempts to reduce imposition through questions, conditional expressions, or mitigated suggestions. Off-record strategies accounts for 10 data (9,1%). The data were realized through indirect expressions and rhetorical questions that encourage the audience to reflect rather than directly imposing an interpretation. The data examples are *"Kenapa kita takut?"* (Why should we be afraid?) and *"Apakah kita up to date dengan hal-hal yang lagi happening di langit?"* (Are we up to date with what is happening in the heavens?). The use of off-record strategies through rhetorical questions has

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also been reported in studies of Indonesian Islamic preachers (Urohmah et al., 2024; Ibrahim & Anam, 2026).

1. Bald on Record (Directness as Religious Guidance)

Brown and Levinson describe bald-on-record as an explicit, direct, and unmitigated performance of an FTA, where the speaker prioritizes communicative efficiency over redressive action. Direct imperatives are a typical realization of this strategy.

Data 1

"Berdoalah sebanyak mungkin." (Pray as much as possible)

Context

This utterance occurs when UHA is discussing the Day of Arafah (*Yaum Arafah*) and its religious significance. Before saying *"Berdoalah sebanyak mungkin,"* (Pray as much as possible), he explains that Arafah is a highly significant day for prayer and that it is described as a day when Allah grants freedom from Hell to many believers. He then encourages the audience to maximize their worship on this day.

The surrounding discourse further explains that the audience should use the Day of Arafah for various forms of worship, including fasting, prayer, remembrance of Allah, charity, and other acts of devotion. Therefore, the utterance is not an isolated command. It is part of a religious exhortation in which the preacher is motivating the audience to take advantage of an important religious occasion.

Analysis

The expression "*Berdoalah*" (pray) contains the imperative form *-lah*, which directly instructs the hearers to perform an action of "pray". There is no hedge, apology, question, or other linguistic device that minimizes the imposition. The preacher does not say "Perhaps you could pray as much as possible." or "Would you like to pray more?'. Instead, he directly says *"Berdoalah sebanyak mungkin."* (Pray as much as possible). Thus, the utterance is appropriately categorized as Bald on Record. From Brown and Levinson's perspective, the utterance potentially threatens the hearers' negative face, because the preacher is directing them to perform a particular action. However, the directness is justified by the communicative context. The preacher's purpose is to provide clear religious guidance and encouragement, and the audience is attending a religious lecture in which such guidance is expected. This is therefore an example in which maximum clarity and efficiency are prioritized over linguistic mitigation.

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The main function of the utterance is becoming religious exhortation and motivation. The preacher wants the audience to understand that the Day of Arafah should not be wasted and that prayer should be maximized. This is reinforced later when he says that those who want to attain the perfection of blessings should maximize worship on Arafah. The bald-on-record strategy functions to deliver the religious message clearly, efficiently, and emphatically.

Data 2

"Jagalah akhlak kita." (Let us maintain our morals)

Context

This utterance occurs earlier in the preaching when UHA discusses the meaning of the sacred months (Bulan Haram), particularly Dzulhijjah. He explains that in the contemporary context, the prohibition against fighting can be related to various forms of conflict in modern life, including arguments, insulting one another on social media, criticizing fellow Muslims, and conflicts between different groups. He also extends the point beyond Muslims, explaining that harmful conflict with non-Muslims can also constitute wrongdoing.

Analysis

The utterance of "*Jagalah akhlak kita*." (Let us maintain our morals) is classified as a bald-on-record strategy because it is expressed in the form of a direct imperative. The utterance occurs when UHA explains the appropriate behaviour during the sacred months. He relates the prohibition of fighting to contemporary forms of conflict, including arguments, insulting others on social media, and interpersonal and intergroup disputes. transcript After presenting these examples, he concludes, *"Makanya jagalah akhlak kita karena kehormatannya bulan haram atau bulan terhormat."* (So, let us maintain our morals, out of respect for the sacred month). The imperative *"Jagalah"* (Let us maintain) irectly instructs the audience to maintain their moral conduct without hedging or other forms of mitigation. According to Brown and Levinson, such direct and unmitigated directives are characteristic of bald-on-record strategy. Nevertheless, the use of the inclusive pronoun *"kita"* (we) creates a sense of shared responsibility because the preacher includes himself together with the audience.

There is an important contextual feature here, the preacher says "*akhlak kita*" (our morals) rather than "*akhlak kalian*." (your morals). This is significant. If he had said:*"Jagalah akhlak kalian."* (Maintain your morals),

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the utterance would position the preacher outside the group and the audience as the people who need correction. The inclusive pronoun *"kita"* (we) places the preacher and audience within the same moral group. The inclusive *"kita"* (we) modifies the interpersonal relationship, but it does not change the fundamental directness of the directive. Thus, although the utterance is bald on record in its directive form, it is not intended as a harsh or confrontational command. Rather, it functions as a direct religious exhortation aimed at encouraging collective moral behaviour.

This is also consistent with Qur'an. An-Nahl:125, which instructs believers to invite others "with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best". It states "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is (rightly) guided." The verse provides a religious framework for understanding direct guidance as a communicative act whose appropriateness depends on wisdom, manner, and purpose.

2. Positive Politeness (Solidarity and Shared Religious Identity)

Data 1

"*Teman-teman yang dirahmati Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*." (Friends who are blessed by Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala)

Context

The utterance appears when UHA is about to begin discussing the main topic of the preaching, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Before introducing the topic, he says, *"Baik teman-teman yang dirahmati Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala"*. (Friends who are blessed by Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). "*Pada malam ini kita akan bahas.."* (Tonight, we are going to discuss..) and then explains that the actual topic is FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).

A similar form of address appears later when he discusses the Hijri calendar. He says, *"Nah makanya teman-teman yang dirahmati Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, malam ini saya pengen berbagi sama kalian tentang Apa itu Zulhijjah?"* (So, friends who are blessed by Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, tonight I would like to share with you about what Zulhijjah is) before inviting the audience to learn about Zulhijjah and its significance.

Analysis

This utterance of *"Teman-teman yang dirahmati Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala."* (Friends who are blessed by Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) represents Positive Politeness because the speaker explicitly establishes a sense of

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closeness, solidarity, and shared identity with the hearers. The expression *"teman-teman"* (friends) functions as an address term that reduces the social distance between the preacher and the audience. He addresses the audience as friends rather than using a formal or hierarchical form of address such as *"Jama'ah"* (congregation). The expression *"yang dirahmati Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala"* (blessed by Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) also establishes common religious ground between the speaker and the hearers. From Brown and Levinson's perspective, the use of an address term that emphasizes closeness and shared identity is a realization of positive politeness because it attends to the hearers' positive face by treating them as members of the same social and religious community. Therefore, the utterance functions to reduce social distance, establish solidarity, and create a warm interpersonal atmosphere before the preacher delivers his religious message.

The utterance is also in line with Qur'an. Ali Imran:159, which describes the Prophet's gentleness and states that harshness would have caused people to disperse from around him. It states "By mercy from Allah (Muhammad) you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude (in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you....". The verse foregrounds the relationship between gentleness and maintaining social bonds. UHA's inclusive language and friendly address terms can be understood as communicative practices consistent with this principle: reduce social distance and support an atmosphere in which religious guidance can be received.

Data 2

"Lagi ngapain? Lagi ngejatuhin ayam Ustaz, repot banget, hehe." (What are you doing? Are you trying to knock down a chicken, Ustadz? That's too much work, hehe.)

Context

This utterance occurs at the beginning of the preaching, when UHA is explaining the concept of ihsan in slaughtering sacrificial animals. He first explains that ihsan means avoiding unnecessary suffering to the sacrificial animal. He then discusses the appropriate technique for bringing down the animal before slaughter, particularly a cow. After explaining that cows need to be brought down carefully, he contrasts this with chickens and humorously says *"Kalau ayam gak perlu dijatuhin yah."* (There's no need to knock down the chicken, okay). *"Lagi ngapain? Lagi ngejatuhin ayam Ustaz, repot banget, hehe. Ayam tinggal di sebelah tangan juga bisa."* (What are you doing? Are you trying to knock down a chicken, Ustadz? That's too much work, hehe.). He then returns to the serious explanation that people often do not understand

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the proper technique for bringing down sacrificial animals, which can cause the animals to become stressed and affect the quality of the meat.

Analysis

This utterance of *"Lagi ngapain? Lagi ngejatuhin ayam Ustaz, repot banget, hehe."* (What are you doing? Are you trying to knock down a chicken, Ustadz? That's too much work, hehe) represents the positive politeness strategy of joking. The humour emerges from the contrast between a large animal such as a cow, which needs a specific technique to be brought down, and a chicken, which obviously does not require such a complicated procedure. The expression *"repot banget"* (That's too much work) creates a humorous atmosphere and invites the audience to share the amusement. The addition of "*hehe"* explicitly marks the utterance as humorous rather than confrontational or serious.

According to Brown and Levinson, joking is a positive-politeness strategy because it can create shared amusement and common ground between the speaker and hearers. In this context, the humour invites the audience to laugh together with the preacher and reduces social distance between the preacher and the audience and makes the religious explanation more engaging and accessible. The speaker uses humour as an interpersonal strategy before returning to the main explanation concerning the proper treatment of sacrificial animals. Therefore, the utterance functions not only to entertain the audience but also to establish solidarity and maintain a friendly relationship between the preacher and his hearers. The use of humor as a politeness strategy in preaching has been noted in other studies (MUI, 2024; Kemenag, 2026).

3. Negative Politeness (Negotiating Religious Authority and Audience Autonomy)

Data 1

"Boleh nggak kita ambil yang lebih istimewa lagi nih?" (Could we take something even more special?)

Context

It is said as UHA explains that a Muslim's life does not necessarily have to be divided or positioned in opposition between worldly and spiritual matters. Previously, he stated that he did not want to set worldly life against the life of the hereafter and emphasized that the two can coexist harmoniously. He then said: *"Boleh nggak kita ambil yang lebih lebih istimewa lagi nih? Ini bagus, ini keren tapi ada yang lebih keren lagi ada yang lebih istimewa."* (Could we take something even more special? This is good, this is great, but

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there is something even greater and more special). Afterward, he explained that something more special is to attain both worldly and spiritual blessings, or *"akhirat plus dunia."* (the hereafter plus the world). Thus, contextually, *"Boleh nggak kita..."* (Could we...) is not a literal question asking for permission.

Analysis

The question "*Boleh nggak kita ambil yang lebih istimewa lagi nih?*" (Could we take something even more special?) represents a negative politeness strategy, particularly the use of a question to soften the force of a suggestion. According to Brown and Levinson, questions and hedges can minimize the imposition of an FTA by allowing the hearer greater freedom of action. The expression "*Boleh nggak...?"* (Could we...? literally takes the form of a question, but pragmatically it functions as a mitigated suggestion. Instead of directly saying "*Kita ambil yang lebih istimewa."* (Let us take something more special), the preacher formulates the suggestion as a question. This makes the proposition less imposing because the audience is not directly commanded to accept the idea.

The expression *"kita"* (we) is also important. Although *"kita"* (we) can create solidarity and therefore has a positive-politeness dimension, in this particular utterance its primary function is to soften the proposal. The preacher presents the choice as something that he and the audience can consider together rather than something that he unilaterally imposes. He leaves room for the audiences to mentally consider the proposal. Therefore, the audience's negative face is saved by giving them freedom to make a choice and given greater consideration. This aligns with research showing that negative politeness is a key resource for negotiating authority in Indonesian Islamic preaching (Santoso et al., 2026).

Data 2

"*Kalau perlu nanti bikin program mulai tahun depan...*" (If necessary, perhaps we could organize a program starting next year...)

Context

This utterance occurs when UHA is discussing the special status of the first ten nights of Dzulhijjah. He compares the significance of these nights with the last odd nights of Ramadan and mentions the enthusiasm of Muslims in pursuing Lailatul Qadar. He then encourages the audience to pursue the special opportunities in the first ten nights of Dzulhijjah. However, instead of immediately giving a firm instruction to organize a program, he says "*Kalau perlu nanti bikin program mulai tahun depan kalau sekarang udah terlalu*

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mepet ya." (If necessary, perhaps we could organize a program starting next year, for now, it's getting too close)

He then develops the idea himself, saying that next year they could organize a program every night during the beginning of Dzulhijjah. This context is very important because the speaker is proposing a future program, not ordering the audience to organize one immediately.

Analysis

The utterance of "*Kalau perlu nanti bikin program mulai tahun depan...*" (If necessary, perhaps we could organize a program starting next year...) represents negative politeness through hedging and minimizing the imposition of a proposed action. The expression *"kalau perlu"* (if necessary) functions as a hedge because it does not present the proposed program as an obligatory action. This is a conditional expression. It does not assume that the program must be created. Instead, the speaker presents it as an option that depends on circumstances.

The phrase *"mulai tahun depan"* (starting next year) further reduce the urgency of the proposal. The potential FTA is the suggestion that the audience/community should organize a religious program. such as a direct statement *"Tahun depan bikin program setiap malam."* (Next year, we can hold the program every night). According to Brown and Levinson, hedging and minimizing imposition are strategies used to protect the hearer's negative face by reducing the pressure associated with an FTA. Therefore, the utterance functions as a tentative proposal rather than a direct command, allowing the audience greater freedom to decide whether and how the proposed program should be implemented.

This utterance also illustrates that negative politeness strategies reflected in Qur'an At Taha:44 that instructs to speak gently offers a relevant ethical perspective on considerate delivery. Its translation says "And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear (Allah)."

4. Off Record (Indirectness and Religious Reflection)

Data 1

"Kenapa kita takut?" (Why should we be afraid?)

Context

This utterance appears when UHA is explaining the Islamic reinterpretation of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Before this utterance, he explains that FOMO in an Islamic context means being afraid of missing important moments or events in the Hijri calendar. He then states that one

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reason people should feel concerned is because they may be "not close" or "not connected" with Allah.

He explains this idea through the expression *"kita nggak gaul sama Allah"* (We're not close to Allah), which he interprets as not knowing what is "happening" on the side of Allah. He describes religiously significant events as things that are also "happening" in heaven, among the angels and other creatures of Allah. Immediately after explaining this, he asks *"Kenapa kita takut?"* (Why should we be afraid?). He then continues by explaining that people should feel concerned if they are not spiritually connected with Allah or are not among those who are close to Allah.

Analysis

"Kenapa kita takut?" (Why should we be afraid?) represents an off-record politeness strategy because the speaker communicates his intended message indirectly through a rhetorical question. The question encourages them to examine what they are afraid of missing and why religious FOMO should matter to them. In this context, the utterance does not merely seek an answer from the audience. It is formally a question, but pragmatically it functions as an indirect invitation to self-reflection. UHA does not directly say "You should be afraid if you are not close to Allah.", where the utterance potentially involves a face-threatening act (FTA) because the preacher is addressing the audience's religious awareness and implicitly questioning whether they are sufficiently connected with Allah. This would be considerably more confrontational because it directly evaluates the hearers' religious condition.

Saying *"Kenapa kita takut?"* (Why should we be afraid?) is to avoid explicitly assigning blame or making a direct judgment. The inclusive pronoun *"kita"* (we) is also important. It does not isolate the audience as the object of criticism but places the speaker and hearers within the same group. Therefore, the indirect question softens the potential FTA and encourages reflection without directly imposing an evaluation on the hearers.

Data 2

"Apakah kita up to date dengan hal-hal yang lagi happening di langit kayak gitu?" (Are we up to date with what is happening in the heaven?)

Context

This utterance occurs immediately after UHA explains the concept of *"gaul sama Allah"* (Close to Allah). He explains that being close to Allah involves knowing what is "happening" on the side of Allah. He expands the

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metaphor by saying that important events are not only "happening" on earth or in places such as Masjidil Haram, Makkah, and Madinah, but also in Baitul Makmur, heaven, and among the angels and noble creatures of Allah. He then asks *"Apakah kita up to date dengan hal-hal yang lagi happening di langit kayak gitu? sehingga kita termasuk orang yang gaul sama Allah."* (Are we up to date with what is happening in the heaven? So that we can be among those who are close to Allah).

He subsequently explains that if people are not close to Allah," they should feel concerned because they may not be among those who are close to Allah. He then connects this idea with *Waliyullah*, or people who are close to Allah.

The utterance of *"Apakah kita up to date dengan hal-hal yang lagi happening di langit kayak gitu?"* (Are we up to date with what is happening in the heaven?) represents an off-record politeness strategy because the speaker conveys an implicit message through an indirect question. Rather than directly instructing the audience to pay attention to the Hijri calendar and religious occasions, the preacher presents the issue as a question. The question implicitly suggests "We should be up to date with what is happening in the religious sphere". This is consistent with Brown and Levinson's concept of off-record indirectness, the speaker does not make the intended directive explicit, but provides contextual clues from which the hearer can infer it.

According to Brown and Levinson, this indirectness is characteristic of an off-record strategy because the hearers are required to infer the intended meaning from the surrounding context. Pragmatically, the question implies that Muslims should be aware of important religious moments and should not only be concerned with what is trending in the worldly sphere. The inclusive pronoun *"kita"* (we) further reduces the possibility of direct criticism because the speaker includes himself together with the audience. Thus, the utterance functions as an indirect encouragement for the audience to evaluate their religious awareness and become more attentive to significant moments in the Hijri calendar.

This use of indirectness can be considered alongside Qur'an. An-Nahl:125, particularly its emphasis on wisdom and good instruction. The verse does not prescribe off-record language specifically, but it provides a broader principle for considering how religious messages may be communicated in ways that encourage understanding and reflection. Thus, off-record strategies in the preaching's function not only to reduce explicitness but also to involve the audience in interpreting religious meaning.

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Conclusion

This study concludes that UHA employs four politeness strategies: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record in his preaching. These strategies help establish solidarity, minimize face-threatening acts, and encourage religious reflection. Overall, politeness plays an important role in delivering Islamic messages persuasively and respectfully. There are 110 utterances analyzed as research data, positive politeness used in 50 data points (45.5%). Bald-on-record occurs in 35 data points (31,8%), negative politeness occurs in 15 data points (13,6%) while off-record appears in 10 data points (9,1%). Positive politeness is primarily realized through inclusive expressions, friendly forms of address, humour, and expressions of solidarity that reduce social distance between the preacher and the audience. Bald-on-record is used to deliver direct religious instructions and encouragement, while negative politeness minimizes imposition through questions, conditional expressions, and suggestions. Off-record strategies encourage the audience to reflect on their religious awareness through indirect questions.

In conclusion, UHA employs various politeness strategies to communicate religious messages effectively while maintaining a positive relationship with his audience. Positive politeness is the dominant strategy, indicating the importance of solidarity, familiarity, and shared religious identity in his preaching style. The findings suggest that politeness strategies play an important role in making Islamic preaching engaging, persuasive, and respectful. This study contributes to the growing body of research on politeness in religious discourse and offers practical insights for preachers seeking to communicate respecfully and persuasively in digital spaces.

AI Declaration

In accordance with the principles of academic integrity and responsible research, the use of ChatGPT (OpenAI) in the preparation of this manuscript was strictly limited to grammatical correction and linguistic refinement. All intellectual contributions, theoretical arguments, empirical analyses, and scholarly interpretations remain entirely the responsibility of the authors. The authors have critically reviewed all AI-assisted language revisions and accept full accountability for the final manuscript

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