

A STUDY ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH BASED ON POLITNESS STRATEGIES USED BY THE JAKARTA POST READERS

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ABSTRACT

Freedom of speech or expression is an indication of a democratic country. Indonesia that has transformed itself from an authoritarian government during the New Order Era into a democratic country in the so called Reform Era. This study is an attempt to find out the existence of freedom of expression in the Indonesian printed media. The data were collected from the Jakarta Post Readers' Forum from 1 November 2010 to 28 February 2011. The data were then classified and analysed based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies. The data analysis shows that a lot of utterances can be classified under Politeness Strategy 1 (the least polite strategy out of the four strategies). This proves that people are now free to express their ideas and criticisms in the most direct manner without fear of being arrested or reprimanded by the government. Even the sensitive issues like SARA (Ethnic, Religion, Racial and Communal) conflicts can be freely discussed in the printed media. Thus freedom of expression is prevailing in Indonesia under the New Era government.

Keywords: *politeness strategy, freedom of expression, democracy*

ABSTRAK

Kebebasan berpendapat atau berekspresi merupakan sebuah indikasi dari sebuah negara demokratik. Indonesia yang merupakan sebuah pemerintahan otoriter selama era Orde Baru, berubah menjadi negara demokratik yang disebut sebagai era reformasi. Artikel ini merupakan salah satu cara untuk mengetahui keberadaan kebebasan berekspresi di media cetak Indonesia. Data didapatkan dari forum pembaca Jakarta Post dari 1 November 2010 sampai 28 Februari 2011. Data tersebut diklasifikasi dan dianalisis berdasarkan teori strategi kesopanan 1 (salah satu dari 4 strategi kesopanan). Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat sekarang memiliki kebebasan untuk mengekspresikan ide dan kritik mereka secara langsung sekalipun tanpa ketakutan tekanan dari pemerintah. Bahkan untuk isu sensitive seperti konflik SARA (suku, agama, ras, dan antargolongan) bisa secara bebas didiskusikan dalam media cetak. Demikianlah kebebasan berekspresi yang berlaku di Indonesia di bawah pemerintahan era baru.

Kata kunci: *strategi kesopanan, kebebasan berekspresi, demokrasi*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Before the reform era, the Government tight control over the print and broadcast media resulted in a little scope for dissenting opinions and public debates. Almost all news in the newspapers, radios, and television are uniformed. Public debates, especially related with sensitive issues the so called *SARA* (Ethnic, Racial, Religious, and Inter-communal conflicts) in the media were almost non existence. The government did not allow such debates to be publicly carried out. The government at that time argued that bringing out such issues could create contra-productive situation in society. A newspaper or a magazine was not allowed to be critical to the government. Direct and harsh criticisms to the government would risk of having its publication license revoked or suspended. It happened to *Sinar Harapan* newspaper and *Tempo* weekly newsmagazine whose publication licenses were suspended in early 1980s due to their harsh criticisms to the government.

After the Reform Era, Indonesia is becoming a democratic country. One of the important indications of the democratic country is the prevailing press freedom which can be enjoyed by all walks of life in the country. As we may have been aware that the four pillars of democracy are Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, and Press. As one of the democratic pillars, Press plays a very important role in channeling people's voices. What people's feel and think about a range of social, environmental, and political issues cannot be heard by those who are in power without the help of mass media. Indeed free flow of information is very detrimental in developing a healthy democratic country.

To ensure good governance as well as checks and balances runs well press must be independent or non-partisan. Honest/ objective and balanced news coverage is very useful for general public and those who are in power. With quality and easy access to information people will be able to make responsible and informed choices during the general or local government election. On the other hand, the elected people representatives and government top executives can be continuously monitored whether they uphold their oaths of offices and the wishes of people who elected them. In line with the spirit of press freedom, newspapers have provided rooms for open discussion and free expression of ideas on various hot issues. One of the regular features provided by a newspaper to accommodate its readers' comments and ideas is the so called 'Reader's Forum. In this forum readers are free to exchange ideas, arguments, comments, and suggestions.

In Readers' Forum, readers practically can write anything. Their comments and ideas are presented in various ways and tones depending on the issues to be raised and the background of readers who wrote the comments. In this study the writer is interested in finding out what kind of politeness strategies used by readers in presenting their comments, arguments, or ideas in the newspaper in this Reform Era based on the Brown and Levinson's theory.

The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson

As previously mentioned the analysis of this study is based on Brown and Levinson Theory. In this theory Brown and Levinson assume that being polite is the nature of human beings so everyone is supposed to be polite. Therefore, they envisioned that their theory is universally applicable.

The first thing to be discussed concerning the universal politeness strategy of Brown & Levinson (1978) is face. Face is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 66). There are two types of face i.e. negative face and positive face. According to Tracy (1990) positive face is "the desire to be appreciated and approved of by selected others". Meanwhile negative face is "a person's want to be unimpeded and free from imposition" (p. 210). In

reality verbal or non-verbal communication does not always meet with face wants of the addressee and/or speaker. According to Brown & Levinson (1978), if communication threatens the face wants of the addressee and/or speaker, this act of communication will be categorized as “face threatening act” (FTA). For example, when we make a request, we, as speakers (S), are impeding on addressee or hearer (H) not to do what H wants but rather to do what we (S) want. In this example, our speech act threatens hearer’s (H’s) negative face (Fasold, 1990, p. 161). On the other hand, H’s positive face is threatened when H receives “a contradiction or expression of disagreement” from S. It is because S thinks there is something wrong with the opinion held by the hearer (H).

As previously mentioned, Speaker (S) may also experience face threatening acts. For example, S’s negative face could be threatened in the case of giving offer. If S carries out the offer S would be meeting H’s wants and not necessarily S’s own wants. While the example of face threatening act to S’s positive face is in the case of confession, admissions of guilt, and apologies. In this case, S is admitting that what S has done is something that is not expected (Fasold, 1990, p. 161).

Basically the politeness theory of Brown & Levinson is based on the two assumptions of face wants described above. They assume that everyone has both negative and positive face and these two aspects of face are sometimes threatened by another (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 63; Fasold, 1990, p. 161). In addition, Brown & Levinson (1978) assumed that the speaker is “endowed with...a precisely a definable mode of reasoning from ends to means that will achieve those ends” (p. 63). Based on these above mentioned assumptions, Brown & Levinson (1978) believe that a person will select the most suitable politeness strategy before performing an FTA.

Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies can be classified into five super strategies which are given in the chart below (the higher the number of strategy, the more polite it is).

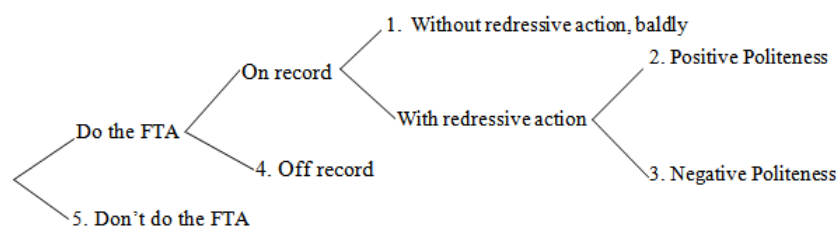


Figure 1 Five politeness strategies
Source: Brown & Levinson (1978)

Figure 1 shows that the act of FTA is classified into two groups, i.e. on record and off record. An FTA act is categorized as on record (strategies 1, 2, and 3) when an expression has “one unambiguously attributable intention with which witnesses would concur”. However, the expression will be classified as off record when it can have “more than one unambiguously attributable intention” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, pp. 73-74). For example, if Mr. Bambang wanted to borrow Mr. Budi’s car and said, “May I borrow your car tomorrow?”. In this case Mr. Bambang was using on record strategy because the request to borrow Mr. Budi’s car is unambiguous. However, if Mr. Bambang said “I have to pick up my wife at the hospital tomorrow, but my car is now being fixed at the service station and will be ready in three days”, he was using off record strategy because there is no explicit request.

As previously mentioned there are 3 strategies which fall under on record category. Firstly, doing an FTA act baldly (Strategy 1), it means S does an FTA without redressive action. It happens when an FTA is done by “the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 74). With this strategy, Mr. Bambang would say, “Lend me your car tomorrow!”. If Mr. Bambang decided to ‘give face’ to Mr. Budi, he would give redressive action (Strategies 2, and 3). Strategy 2 (positive politeness) is “oriented toward the positive face of H (Mr. Budi), the positive

image that he claims himself”. While Strategy 3 (negative politeness) is “oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (redressing) H’s (Mr. Budi’s) negative face, his basic wants to maintain claims of territory and self-determination”. (Brown and Levinson 1978: 75). With strategy 2 Mr. Bambang would say “Hey, that’s a great suit you have on! Is it new? (...) By the way, may I borrow your car tomorrow?” By asking about Mr. Budi’s suit, Mr. Bambang showed that he was interested in something that Mr. Budi presumably found desirable, in this case, the suit. With strategy 3 Mr. Bambang might say “You couldn’t by any chance loan me your car, tomorrow, could you?” In this case, Mr. Bambang was trying to partially satisfy Mr. Budi’s desire not to be imposed upon by implying that Mr. Bambang did not think Mr. Budi could loan him the car. The detailed categories of Politeness Strategy 1, 2, and 3 are given in the Table 1 - 3 below.

Table 1 Politeness strategy 1 –without redressive action (bald on record)

Category	Example
An Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help!! 2. Watch out! 3. Your Pants are on fire! 4. Give me just one more week! 5. Don’t burn your hand! 6. Get up, get up! (There’s a) big snake!
Task Oriented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give money! 2. Open the door! 3. Come home right now! 4. Clean the floor! 5. Bring that book!
Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put your coat away 2. Eat up your meal 3. Stay away from me 4. Lend me a hand here 5. give me the nails
Alerting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Careful! He’s a dangerous man 2. your slip is showing 3. your wig is askew; let me fix it for you 4. Your headlights are on! 5. Turn off your cell phone in gas station!

Table 2 Politeness strategies – with redressive action

Positive Politeness (Strategy 2)		Negative Politeness (Strategy 3)	
P#1	Notice, attend to H’s interests, wants, needs, goods, etc.	N#1	Be conventionally indirect
P#2	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)	N#2	Question, Hedge
P#3	Intensify interest to H	N#3	Be pessimistic
P#4	In-group identity marker	N#4	Minimize the imposition
P#5	Seek agreement	N#5	Give deference
P#6	Avoid disagreement	N#6	Apologize
P#7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground	N#7	Impersonalize the S and H
P#8	Joke	N#8	State the FTA as an instance of a general rule
P#9	Assert presuppose knowledge of and concern for H’s wants	N#9	Nominalize
P#10	Offer & promise	N#10	Go on record as incurring debt, or as not indebting
P#11	Be optimistic		
P#12	Include S and H in the activity		
P#13	Give gifts to H		
P#14	Assume or assert reciprocity		
P#15	Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)		

The last (fourth) strategy is off record or indirect strategy. This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to being imposing. The table 3 below shows examples of this strategy with different categories.

Table 3 Politeness strategy 4 – off record

Category	Example
Give Hints	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's cool in here 2. I need some more nails to finish this rabbit hutch 3. This soup's a bit bland 4. That window isn't open 5. I forget to bring my wallet
Be Vague	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perhaps someone should have been more responsible. 2. Oh god, I've got a headache again. 3. A penny you saved is a penny you earned 4. That house needs a touch of paint
Be sarcastic, or joking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yeah, he's a real rocket scientist! 2. Harry's a real fish {drinks, swims, is slimy, is cold-blooded} like a fish 3. He's a son of a Jain household 4. The main thing is that (he) eats kicks.

Source: Brown & Levinson (1978)

According to Tracy (1990) negative politeness is “similar to what people in everyday life mean by ‘being polite’”, while positive politeness is a “communicative way of building solidarity, showing the other is liked and seen as desirable” (pp. 211-212). As a matter of fact, the selection of politeness strategy varies from one person to others. Brown & Levinson (1978) stated that there are three factors affecting the decision of speakers in using politeness strategy. They are: (1) the ‘social distance’ (D) of S (the speaker) and H (the hearer) (a symmetric relation). For example, with a friend there is not a great social distance, however, there is with a stranger; (2) the relative ‘power’ (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation). For example, a friend does not hold the same position of power as does the President; and (3) the absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the particular culture. For example, asking someone to borrow a house would not be as great an imposition as asking that person to borrow one million Rupiahs.

The politeness strategies serve two different functions. The first one is to alleviate/ minimize the FTA from S to H. The second one is to show intimacy between interlocutors. In this study the writer will analyse the data corpus from Reader’s Froum of the Jakarta Post. Only utterances using Politeness Strategy 1 will be analysed in this study.

METHOD

The data for this study were collected from the Readers Forum of the Jakarta Post from 1st November 2010 to 28 February 2011. Relevant utterances were selected and analyzed based on Brown and Levinson Theory. The data will be categorized into 4 main issues, namely SARA, Government and Legislative Performance, Law Enforcement, and Corruption Cases.

DISCUSSION

As the main objective of this study is to find out the freedom of expression in the printed media, the analysis will be mainly focused on the use of politeness strategy 1 (Bold on record, without redressive action). As described in the chart above, this strategy is the least polite out of the 4 politeness strategies. The use of this strategy indicates that freedom of expression is really prevailing in Indonesia.

SARA

SARA (Ethnic, Religious, Racial, and Inter-communal) conflicts are the most sensitive issues that were not allowed to be discussed openly in the printed media during the New Order government under the late President Suharto. However, in this Reform Era, it can be freely discussed in the media. The following quotations show how SARA issues are freely discussed and the discussion can be categorized as using politeness strategy 1.

Table 4 List of questions show SARA issues discussed

Category	Jakarta Post Readers' Statement
An Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It 's high time that the good Muslims in Indonesia, and also in the rest of world, take a stand to fight against the extreme fanaticism of those who have somehow infected by the virus of wahabism. (December 8, 2010) 2. You say it because you think any person who wears a <i>hijab</i> or <i>jilbab</i> is Wahhabi..and that's wrong! 3. Shame on the Indonesian government for letting this (relious violence) and even worse things happen! (December 14, 2010)
Task Oriented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It 's time for people to import AK-47 to defend themselves because the government won't help. (December 14, 2010) 2. As long as politicians in Jakarta, or anywhere in Indonesia, like to see themselves aligned with Islamic hard-liners, they should be denied access to Jakarta's political environement, permanently. (December 21, 2010) 3. Mr. President, do your job and arrest these thugs. (December 15, 2010)
Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Let us live in peace and harmony. (December 8, 2010) 2. So, do not blame others for the mistakes we made. (December 29, 2010) 3. As moslims we have to be more tolerant to people from other faiths and religions. (January 19, 2011) 4. Let's create harmony to make better lives in future. (January 19, 2011) 5. Burning down churches and mosque will never happen again, as well as attacking another person on behalf of defending one's religion. (December 10, 2010).
Alerting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fundementally we are a hugely hypocritical nation, religion here is all about the ceremony, the ritual. (December 8, 2010) 2. I am particularly disturbed by the prosecution and proposed banishment of Ahmadis, whose "deviant" beliefs have to be "corrected". (December 30, 2010) 3. The President needs the direst of warnings, he is the man in office, but refused to act. (December 29, 2010) 4. Violence will only create hatred and solve nothing. (December 29, 2010) 5. SBY and the new police chief should be ashamed. (December 14, 2010) 6. SBY asked Obama to stop the burning of the Koran, but he is not willing to defend Christians in Indonesia. Shame on you! 7. There have never been words of regret or apology from any president, Sukarno, Soeharto, B.J. Habibie, Gus Dur, Megawati or SBY. for those West Papuans killed and tortured. SBY as a farther never shows this to his children, so no wonder the children disobey the parents. (January 25, 2011) 8. The Thais simply call us "Malay", short for "Malaysian". The same goes for us when we call Indonesia (or Indonesians) "Indon". We don't think Thais disrespect us by calling us "Malay" in the same way that we don't disrespect Indonesians when we call them "Indon". (January 4, 2011)

Law Enforcement

Many people still feel that law enforcement is still too much to be desired. Justice is, in many cases, does not meet people's expectation. Unfair treatment and injustice verdicts frequently happen and hurt people who dream of fair and legal system and law enforcement. The following table shows the Jakarta Post's readers' comments or statements regarding law enforcement issues which fit in politeness strategy 1.

Table 5 Jakarta Post's readers' comments regarding law enforcement issues

Category	Jakarta Post Readers' Statement
An Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What an absolute joke the justice in Indonesia. Money rules this country! (January 24, 2011) 2. And justice for all: the law is dead in this country. (January 24, 2011) 3. Well, it's been clear for a long time that the law in Indonesia isn't that fair. After all, money wins everytime. (January 24, 2011) 4. Law enforcement in our country has been shamed. How could a prisoner be out sightseeing! (January 10, 2011) 5. Absurd! What a shame! How come everything is always possible in this country? (January 10, 2011)
Task Oriented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Severe punishment for Gayus is surely needed to deter others from doing the same crime. (January 24, 2011) 2. We need revolution to end this situation. (January 24, 2011) 3. Please, Mister President, stay away. If the police cannot solve the case, then sack them or replace them. (January 20, 2011). 4. Gayus is a thief. Lock him up and stone him in public. (December 6, 2010) 5. Members of the police's elite force Mobile Brigade have to show their real face now. To terrorists there is only one answer: shoot on sight. (February 18, 2011)
Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The authorities who hold the leash and let him (Gayus Tambunan) out to stroll should be grilled and buttered as well and not honking around asking questions. (January 11, 2011) 2. Stop the talking, and start the doing, leaders. You should stand up for your own! (November 29, 2010). 3. Therefore law enforcers have to focus on all cases surrounding Gayus' role and we should not be thrown off by Gayus' statement. (January 28, 2011). 4. We need a road safety campaign and we need to stop bad drivers and bad traffic police. Our roads are chaos and killers! (December 21, 2010)
Alerting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Just seven years in prison (for Gayus)? Indonesia is really embarrassing! (January 24, 2011) 2. It's a well-known business. Hundreds of thousands of Indonesians buy passports, identity cards, driver's licenses providing fake information. (January 11, 2011) 3. Maybe Mr. President and his staff possess no knowledge of human rights. That's why they can't distinguish torture, intimidation and violent violations of human rights. (January 25, 2011)

Government Performance

People are now becoming more critical on government performance. Public policies which do not meet public expectation will be definitely criticised. People are also quite critical to the performance of government bureaucracy. The table below shows the selected utterances of the Jakarta Post Readers dealing with government performance issues which fall under the politeness strategy 1.

Table 6 Jakarta Post's readers' statements regarding government performance issue

Category	Jakarta Post Readers' Statement
An Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thus the message from Banten and Temanggung is clear: security, justice, economic prosperity – it's one package! A government that does not understand this, loses the support of its own people,...(February 16, 2011) 2. Be creative instead of just taxing car owners! (December 6, 2010)
Task Oriented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No, Governor Fauzi Bowo, just do your job or leave. If we leave everything to God we don't need police or army. (February 18, 2011) 2. Minister Tifatul, please think and act as a great and global statesperson, not narrowmindedly. (January 15, 2011) 3. There is no need to maintain minister who only waste money without creating productivity. (November 30, 2010) 4. Government has to divest itself of unfruitful bureaucracies that are neither efficient or effective. (January 11, 2011) 5. Increase the price of petrol and stop all subsidized fuel. Maybe it will ease the traffic congestion and force the government to implement some sort of modern public transport system. (December 15, 2010)
Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maybe SBY can try to clarify that the statement (about salary) was misunderstood. (January 28, 2011). 2. Please address this issue (freight costs) as your freight business can only benefit from lower and more sustainable costs, which will give higher volumes of business! (February 17, 2011) 3. Stop exporting problems. (November 27, 2010) 4. Forget about becoming a superpower, if we can't even get one city working in order. (November 27, 2010) 5. What our country needs is change, a more liberal social paradigm, economic competition, a fair and just law, and honest, competent law enforcement. (November 27, 2010)
Alerting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is OK to raise your salary, Mr. President, but of course this must be in accordance with your work performance. (January 28, 2011). 2. The World Bank's own <i>Ease of Business</i> report lists poor governance, poor infrastructure and corruption as the top three reasons for making Indonesia a poor business destination. . (January 28, 2011) 3. It is a traitorous act of betrayal by both the government and NGOs towards arangutans – a species one would think deserves to be held as an icon of Indonesia. Some 60,000 orangutans have been killed in the last 35 years. If this is not a genocide I don't know what it is. (December 9, 2010) 4. It is idiotic to have two prices for the same product in a country where law enforcement is not the strongest, to put it mildly. (December 15, 2010)

Corruption Cases

Many people think that corruption is still thriving in Indonesia. Despite the current government slogan of anti-corruption, it is still the fact of life affecting a lot of people. Many efforts have been done to curb corruption but it has not satisfied people yet. The following utterances, categorized under politeness strategy 1, are given by the Jakarta Post Readers who feel fed-up with corruption in Indonesia.

Table 7 Jakarta Post's readers' statements regarding corruption issue

Category	Jakarta Post Readers' Statement
An Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is so funny. Every Indonesia develops memory related health problems when implicated with corruption. (February 17, 2011) 2. It 's embarrassing enough that (the National Police) have that fatty "drum band" ('fat' bank account). (February 16, 2011) 3. Bali cannot sustain this level of greed and corruption very much longer. (January 28, 2011) 4. Corruption destroys everything. Before it destroys us let's eradicate it first! (January 11, 2011) 5. Indonesia continued to spiral downward into the mire of corruption! (January 11, 2011) 6. Corruption is the biggest problem this country faces! (December 8, 2010) 7. SBY has no courage. The corrupt mafia is too strong for him. (December 8, 2010)
Task Oriented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What Indonesia needs, Mr. Presiden Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, is for you to start doing your job and stand up against corruption as you promised you would. (February 11, 2011) 2. We all want to see better days during SBY leadership, but the mountain is too steep, the ocean too wide. (December 8, 2010) 3. SBY, you 'd better rid your own family and clique of that enormous corruption and nepotism first before you start bothering others. (December 6, 2010)
Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Harry, did she (Nunun) have the same prognosis (<i>chronic dementia</i>) in Singapore? Remember your oath. (February 17, 2011) 2. And what corruption does best is take this away from us. Remember that although graft and corruption may be our culture, this is not unchangeable. (December 10, 2010) 3. The solution is very easy: The death penalty for corruptors. (December 30, 2010)
Alerting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corruption is at every turn. When I asked our driver why there were so many vehicles that were giving out thick black smoke and not being pulled over, he said they just paid off the police. (January 28, 2011). 2. As for jobs, well, if, Mr. President, your officials were not stealing the country's wealth, it could be used to develop Indonesia's sagging infrastructure, thus creating millions of jobs and opportunities for business, and paying a salary that they could actually live on. (February 11, 2011) 3. Unlike the famed monorail, which left a number of concrete megaliths as testimony to the corruption and incompetence of previous governments, the current administration will have piles of stones along the waterfront as its legacy. (February 17, 2011) 4. The source of corruption is coming from within the bureaucracy and entrepreneurs who get money for certain work, jobs or projects. (November 30, 2010) 5. In a country as corrupt as Indonesia the only workable method is to cancel the fuel subsidy completely. (December 10, 2010) 6. ...,the Javanese sultans were often corrupt and had no calms about giving up territory or monopolies to the Dutch. All they want was money and/ or (military) support for their plans to oust their brothers or uncles from the throne. (December 10, 2010) 7. Even the current President has not had any success or proven that he has curbed the corruption. (December 8, 2010)

CONCLUSION

The data presented in the Tables above speak for themselves that freedom of expression is really prevailing in the printed media. We can see how the Jakarta Post readers are free to express anything came up from their mind. They can make suggestions, request certain policies to improved or abolish and even criticize the government and the law enforcers. The analysis based on the politeness strategy shows that there are a lot of utterances, from the data collected during this study, use politeness strategy 1 (bald on record without redressive action). It is the least polite out of the four polite strategies which indicates that people are really free to express their ideas in the most direct manner. The President, Ministers, Governors and other government officials are subject to people criticisms using politeness strategy 1. In some cases the criticism is very blatant and harsh. This sort of criticism was not possible in during the New Order Government under the late President Suharto. The Critics and the printed media would certainly risk their existence if they did so. Practically anything can be discussed in the printed media, including the sensitive issues like SARA which was avoided by the New Order government. The Reform Era which transformed Indonesia to a democratic country has paved the way for the freedom of expression.

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