



## Analysis politeness strategies in characters utterances in *The School for Good and Evil* movie

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**Abstract.** Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies communication. Politeness is a key concept in linguistics and social interactions, referring to the strategies and behaviors people use to show respect, consideration, and deference to others. As suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987), the strategy of politeness has been observed to operate as a regressive measure towards face-threatening actions (FTA). This research aims to analyze the types of politeness strategies and find out the mostly used type of politeness strategies in *The School for Good and Evil* movie. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The researcher used Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of politeness strategies. The form of data are utterances of the characters, indicating politeness strategies. The result of this research is 79 data utterances types of politeness strategies which is divided into: bald-on record strategy (25) times, positive politeness strategy (27) times, negative politeness strategy (15) times, and off-record strategy (12) times. Politeness strategies are the mostly used in this movie is positive politeness strategies, because the speaker and the hearer have a close relationship.

**Keywords:** Politeness Strategy, Pragmatics, Movie, *The School for Good and Evil*.

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of interaction between speakers and listeners that is important in building human relationships and conveying information about facts, opinions, suggestions, marks, and more (Pradipta & Sugiharti, 2022). Communication requires a specific context or conversation, so listeners can recognize what the speaker is saying (Khofiyaa & Silalahi, 2022). Pragmatics as a subfield of linguistics which studies communication. Yule (1996) stated pragmatics is a study of the significance conveyed by a speaker or writer and understood by a listener or reader. Politeness is a major aspect of pragmatics. Brown and Levinson (1987) state Politeness represent several strategies that facilitate effective communication and convey social norms. Extensive research in

conversation analysis has significantly enhanced our comprehension of conversational dynamics and the complex means in which they convey social information relationship. According Yule (1996) politeness defines as showing awareness with another person face. Yule (1996) state that politeness can be characterized as the implies utilized to appear mindfulness of another person's face. Politeness is commonly assumed to consist of words such as "please, sorry, excuse, and thank you". Wang (2010) asserts that speakers must possess the ability to select diverse communicative strategies in order to preserve a positive relationship between interlocutors, and they must also implement those strategies. These strategies also known as politeness strategies. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987) classified the categories of politeness strategies, there are bald-on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, and off-record strategy. This research aims to analyze the utterances in *The School for Good and Evil* movie to the type of politeness strategies used by the characters also find the type of politeness strategies are mostly used by the characters in the movie.

Based on the research study, the authors formulate two problem statements. The first, what types of politeness strategies are used by the characters in movie *The School for Good and Evil*. The second, what types of politeness strategies are mostly used by the characters in *The School for Good and Evil* movie.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Study**

There are several previous researches that is relevant to the current research. Two article journals have been found to help identify gaps and avoid duplication of existing research. First is research by Supriyanta and Imam Gozali (2017). The research involved belongs into the field of discourse analysis and employs the theory of politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson. The data consists of a movie script presented in the form of words and utterances. According to this research, Claire Peterson utilized politeness tactics in 37 utterances. Specifically, she employs the bald on record method on (7) times, positive politeness on (20) times, negative politeness on (9) times, and off-record communication on (1) times. The politeness strategies often applied by Claire Peterson are "offer and promise" which is included in the positive politeness strategy. This strategy was used (7) times. Generally, he employs politeness strategies to keep and protect harmonious relations with other individuals in daily interactions.

Second is research by Ni Luh Hani and Ida Ayu Made (2020). The methodology employed for data gathering in this study used documentation approach and note-taking methodology. In addition, the data were categorized according to the politeness type and the speaker's gender. The analysis was conducted qualitatively using the politeness theory according Brown and Levinson (1987) and the sociolinguistic theory according to Ronald Wardhaugh (2010). This research showed that the characters in "*The Patriot*" movie employed 11 out of the 15 strategies accord Brown and Levinson (1987). Concerning the gender of the characters, women continually exhibit a neutral communication style when

engaging in talks with both women and men. On the other hand, men use varying degrees of formality when they have conversations.

From this explanation of the two studies above, it can be seen that this research and their research have similarities in theories used, namely Brown and Levinson (1987) theory. While the difference between their research and this research is the movie genre used and the characters who use politeness strategies. In Supriyanta and Imam Gozali's (2017) research, the movie genre used is romance and their focus is only on one character. Then, in Ni Luh Hani and Ida Ayu Made Puspani's (2020) research, the movie genre used was war/adventure and their focus was the influence of gender on the level of politeness of the characters in the movie. Meanwhile, in this study the genre used is fantasy/magic and this study focuses on the utterances of all characters in *The Patriot* movie.

### **Pragmatics**

Brown and Levinson (1987) state pragmatics described as the examination of the principles governing language use and understanding in context. Meanwhile according to Yule (1996), Pragmatics is a field of study that examines the interpretation of meaning in communication, which includes verbal exchanges between speakers and listeners as well as interactions between writers and readers.

### **Face Threatening Act (FTA)**

Brown and Levinson (1978) argued that activities have the potential to harm or damage individuals' image in society, referred as face threatening actions (FTA). Brown and Levinson define FTA as "those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressed participant" (p.65).

### **Politeness Strategies**

According Brown and Levinson (1987) the strategy of politeness has been observed to operate as a regressive measure towards face threatening actions (FTA). Brown and Levinson categorized politeness strategies into four main classifications there are: 1) Bald-on record strategy (BOR), 2) Positive politeness strategy (PP), 3) Negative politeness strategy (NPS), 4) Off-record strategy (ORS). The following are the explanations for each of the strategies:

#### **1. Bald-on Record Strategy**

This strategy is commonly seen among individuals who have a strong understanding for each other and feel comfortable in their environment, like close friends and family member. Bald-on record has 5 types namely; showing disagreement; giving suggestion or advice; requesting; warning or threatening; using imperative forms.

#### **2. Positive Politeness Strategy**

Positive politeness is to fulfil the positive face needs of the listener, hence boosting their positive face. Positive politeness tactics emphasize warmth and rapport between the speaker and listener. Positive politeness strategies aim to prevent offending by emphasizing amiability. Positive politeness has fifteen types namely; notice and attention to H; exaggerate; interest to H; using in-group identity; seek agreement; avoid disagreement; presuppose/raise/assert common ground; joke; assert or presuppose S's knowledge; offer, promise; be optimistic; include S and H activity; give or ask reason; assume or assert reciprocity; give gifts to H.

### **3. Negative Politeness Strategy**

Negative politeness strategies are a preventive and risk reduction measure against negative face speakers, whose intentions may impose an undue burden on the recipient or listener. Negative politeness strategies have ten types namely: be conventionally indirect; question, hedge; be pessimistic; minimize the imposition; give deference; apologize; impersonalize S and H; state FTA as a general rule; nominalize; go on record as incurring debt or as indebted H.

### **4. Off-record Strategy**

Off-record strategy is using indirect language and avoiding the speaker's potential to be impressive. Off record strategy has fifteen types namely: give hints; give association clues; presuppose; understate; overstate; use tautologies; use contradiction; be ironic; use metaphors; use rhetorical questions; be ambiguous; be vague; over-generalize; displace H; be incomplete or use ellipsis.

## **METHOD**

This research applies descriptive qualitative method to collect and analyze data, which is then organized and categorized. The researcher used qualitative research methodology in this study, as the data was collected from the movie. The data taken from the movie "The School for Good and Evil". The researcher utilizes the Brown and Levinson theory to categorize the statements and interpret the politeness strategies portrayed in movie The School for Good and Evil based on the data. In this research, the instruments are the researcher herself, movie, laptop, the web, and journals related to this research. The data source used by the researcher is the movie The School for Good and Evil directed by Paul Feig from a screenplay co-written with David Magee. Data sources can be retrieved from the Disney+ platform and read the film script to analyze. The movie is about 2 hours and 27 minutes long. Meanwhile, other supporting data are movie scripts taken from the web. The data collection procedures are conducted by researchers including 4 steps. In the first step, watching the movie until it was finished. In the second, searching and reading the movie script. In the third, identifying the utterances that are categorized as politeness strategies. In the fourth, counting the data for politeness strategies. The process of data analysis entails the subsequent stages, there are: 1) selecting and grouping of the data into

four types of politeness strategies, 2) classifying and identifying the utterance based on their politeness strategies, 3) analyzing the data, 4) counting all the politeness strategies type frequencies to see mostly used in the movie, 5) interpreting the result, 6) drawing a conclusion.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Findings of Politeness Strategies

After the researchers analyzed this data using Brown and Levinson theory (1987), the researcher has found several types of politeness strategies in *The School for Good and Evil* as follows:

**Table 1.** Frequency of Politeness Strategies

No	Politeness Strategies	Frequency
1.	Bald-on record strategy	25
2.	Positive politeness strategy	27
3.	Negative politeness strategy	15
4.	Off-record strategy	12
Total Data		79

After classifying the politeness strategy that appeared in *The School for Good and Evil* movie, the researcher finds out 79 data. The most dominant is positive politeness strategies 27 times appeared. The other politeness strategies are bald-on record strategies 25 times appeared, negative politeness strategies 15 times appeared, and off-record strategies 12 times in the whole movies.

#### A. Bald on Record Strategy

##### BOR1-UI // 01.34 – 01.36

Rafal: “Shall we go another round?”

Rhian: “No, we don’t have time”

In this scene, occurs when Rafal and Rhian are practicing or fighting in a sparring session. Rafal proposes to continue the training or fight with an additional round, but Rhian refuses because he feels they do not have enough time for it. In this utterance, including the types of showing disagreement. “No”: this is a direct negation, clearly indicating disagreement. “We don’t have time”: this provides a clear reason for the disagreement, emphasizing urgency of available time.

In terms of face threatening act, the utterance function as negative FTA. When Rhian rejects Rafal's proposal to continue sparring, Rhian threatens Rafal's negative face because he rejects Rafal's request or proposal, which can be considered as a form of control over Rafal's actions. In this scene, Rhian's rejection of Rafal's proposal to continue sparring creates an FTA against Rafal's negative face. Rhian uses logical reasoning to reduce the impact of the threat, while Rafal has previously used softer questions to minimize threats to Rhian's negative face. In summary,

accord Brown and Levinson theory this utterance including showing disagreement and negative FTA.

### B. Positive Politeness Strategy

PP8-U37 // 18:57 – 19:02

Hort: “Most witches don’t have princess hair”

Hort: “**I bet it smells like cake**”

In this scene, Sophie is at school and meets Hort, a student from the *Nevers*. Hort, who has a strange and slightly rude personality, approaches Sophie with curiosity and admiration for her beautiful hair. He comments on Sophie's hair being different from most witches who don't usually have princess-like hair. Hort goes on to say that he believes Sophie's hair smells like cake, showing how fascinated he is with Sophie's appearance. Hort adds that she loves cake, making things awkward and a little uncomfortable for Sophie. In this utterance, including the types of a joke. “I bet it smells like cake” likely meant to be humorous, suggesting something unexpected or whimsical. The humor in this context helps to create a light-hearted atmosphere and foster a sense of friendliness and solidarity between the speaker and the hearer.

In terms of face threatening act, the utterance function as negative FTA because Hort comments on Sophie's appearance in a rather strange and unusual way, which could potentially make Sophie feel uncomfortable or judged. This statement could make Sophie feel that her freedom to maintain a personal distance and not be the subject of unsolicited comments is being threatened. Even if Hort's intention was to break the ice and show interest in a light-hearted way, the way he delivered it could have come across as intrusive and made Sophie feel uncomfortable. Overall, Hort's comments threaten Sophie's negative face because they create a situation where Sophie may feel annoyed by unwanted attention and feel compelled to respond to comments that intrude on her personal space. In summary, according to Brown and Levinson’s method this utterance including joke and negative FTA.

### C. Negative Politeness Strategy

NPS6-U59 // 15:41 - 15:44

Agatha: “You were gonna run away after all?”

Sophie: “Aggie, **I’m sorry**”

In this scene, Sophie and Agatha are close friends who have been through a lot together. Sophie, feeling hopeless and dissatisfied with her current life, decides to run away from their village. Agatha, who has always loyally supported Sophie, is shocked and hurt to learn of this plan. Sophie feels guilty for having hidden her plans from Agatha, who is her close friend and loyal supporter. She apologizes, showing that she is sorry and feels guilty for her actions. In this utterance, including the types of apologize. “I’m sorry” this utterance includes a direct

apology, which acknowledges that the speaker has done something that might have affected Aggie negatively.

The utterance is not considered to the category of FTA because it does not pose a threat or disturbance to the identity or self-esteem of the interlocutor. Instead, it exemplifies a positive apology strategy, where Sophie honestly acknowledges her mistake and expresses regret to Agatha. In summary, according to Brown and Levinson's method this utterance including apologize and does not constitute either a negative or positive FTA.

#### D. **Off Record Strategy**

ORS9-U79 // 02:57 - 02:58

Rhian: "It'll consume you. You can't control it"

Rafal: "I prefer **chaos**"

This scene occurs when Rhian and Rafal are discussing the dark forces or evil plans that Rafal is or will be carrying out. Rhian warns Rafal about the dangers of such forces or plans, while Rafal points out that he prefers chaos to order. Rafal rejected Rhian's warning by saying that he preferred chaos. This shows that Rafal doesn't care about the consequences of his actions and perhaps even enjoys the damage that could be done. In this utterance, including the types of use metaphors. "I prefer chaos" this utterance is using the metaphorical. Literally, chaos refers to complete disorder and confusion. Metaphorically, it suggests a preference for unpredictability, lack of order, and possibly destructive behavior.

The utterance does not qualify as a FTA because Rafal expresses his personal preference without directly attacking or rejecting Rhian. He simply states that he prefers chaos, which is his personal view, and does not threaten or belittle Rhian in the process. This conversation takes place in the context of a discussion about dark powers or evil plans, where Rafal responds to Rhian's warning by expressing his stance and preference. It is more of an expression of personal attitude and choice rather than a threat or rejection towards Rhian. In summary, accord Brown and Levinson method this utterance including use metaphors and does not constitute either negative or positive FTA.

#### **The Politeness Strategies Mostly Used by the Characters in Movie**

The mostly used politeness strategies employed by the characters in the movie *The School for Good and Evil* is positive politeness strategies, with a total of 27 data. This strategy dominates because of the speakers' awareness of the listeners' desire to be respected. This can be seen from Sophie's character who often expresses her speech towards other characters such as Agatha and Rafal. The dominance of Positive Politeness Strategy in this movie is not only Sophie, but many other characters also use it. This is because other characters in this movie also want their speech to be heard and respected. Meanwhile, the mostly used type of positive politeness strategy in this movie was *give or ask reason*. This

can be seen from Sophie's character who often asks (the reason) why other characters do things.

## CONCLUSION

In this analysis, the researcher concludes that there are 79 data on politeness strategy used by the characters, there are 25 bald-on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, 15 negative politeness strategy, 12 off-record strategy. The researcher also found strategies that are mostly used by characters in the movie *The School for Good and Evil*. This strategy is a positive politeness strategy in which the characters use this strategy because the speaker and the listener want to build and have a close relationship. This research focuses on analyzing the politeness strategies used by the characters in *The School for Good and Evil* movie. The findings of this study can be useful for other researchers, as they can use it to support their own research on politeness strategy analysis. In addition, students can also benefit from this study by gaining knowledge about politeness strategies through its findings. It is expected that after reading this study, students will have a better understanding of the various politeness strategies depicted in the analyzed data. The researcher asserts that the application of linguistic theories can help individuals in learning and improving their understanding of using language to communicate with others. Therefore, for future research, it is suggested that other researchers consider analyzing politeness strategies in different contexts.

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