



The Analysis of Politeness Strategy Used by The Main Characters in “Gifted” Film

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ABSTRACT

Politeness strategy is a strategy in the use of language related to the use of good and polite verbal communication, which can make communication work cooperatively. In terms of communicating, politeness strategies are very important to avoid conflicts in communication which means avoiding face-threatening acts (FTA) of the hearer. In researching politeness strategy, the film is a work of art that can be analyzed because it has characters and utterances that can be analyzed and are closely related to real life. Thus, a film entitled "Gifted" was chosen because this film is related to the education of gifted children, the parenting of gifted children, and is built on mental health issues in the world of learning. This study aims to analyze the politeness strategy of the main character in this film. This research used a qualitative descriptive approach and audio-visual data collection approach. The result of the analysis shows there are 60 politeness strategies data found from 512 utterances from the main characters. 37 data of positive politeness strategy categorized into three subtypes: Claim common ground (12 data), Convey that speaker and hearer are cooperators (24 data), and fulfill hearer's want (1 data). 23 data of negative politeness strategy that categorized into: be direct (9 data), do not presume or assume (3 data), do not coerce hearer (3 data), and communicate speaker's want to not impinge (23 data).

Keywords: film, negative, politeness, positive, strategy



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Politeness is an essential aspect of verbal communication. Politeness is a norm that upholds to do or speak well and respect others (Bull, 2008). Politeness in communication is also needed to

keep the conversation cooperative, conducive, and not hurtful. In order to be able to communicate well and use politeness in communicating, it is necessary to know politeness strategies in verbal communication (Leech, 1983). The politeness strategy emerges from the concept of advance (Goffman, 1967). The face here means that everyone has a self-image that must be maintained in communication (Yule, 1996). In maintaining the self-image of someone who must be respected, a politeness strategy is needed to maintain the self-image of the listener. The speaker uses politeness to convey utterances that can face a threatening act (FTA) (Roita et al., 2022). Face-threatening act means utterances that can give a threat to the Hearer's face (self-image), for instance avoid disagreement, asking for help, or ordered something.

Then, the needs of the speaker convey the utterance that consists of FTA makes the speaker convey it without damaging the self-image of the Hearer. Then brown and Levinson (1987) stated that there are two ways to do the FTA by conveying it baldly (on record) or using hints that make that FTA ambiguous (off the record). Conveying FTA using off-the-record can make the Hearer sometimes not get the needs of the FTA from the speaker and can cause the Hearer to misunderstand. Therefore, the speaker needs to deliver FTA using on record. However, the use of on record still categorizes as impolite because the speaker says the FTA baldly. For example, the speaker said, "Your idea is bad; use my idea" the speaker wants to disagree with the Hearer about the Hearer's opinion. That example sounds impolite because the speaker states the FTA baldly or uses it on record. Then, it needs to make that utterance more polite by conveying the FTA with redressive action.

Furthermore, the use of redressive action in a state the FTA uses on record depends on the face of the Hearer, namely positive or negative face. A positive face is the self-image of the Hearer that want to be accepted or to be the same kind as the speaker (Yule, 1996). Then, negative face defines as the want of the hearer to independent and accessible in the means of does not want to impose by the speaker (Yule, 1996). When the Hearer shows a cheerful face, the speaker must convey the FTA with redressive action using a positive politeness strategy. Likewise, if the speaker shows a negative face, then the delivery of FTA with redressive action uses a negative politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, it can be understood that positive and negative politeness appears because of the realization of the positive or negative face of the Hearer.

Politeness strategy is the technique or the way to communicate to appreciate the hearer and maintain the self-image of the speaker that can make the communication run cooperatively. There are two types of politeness strategies, namely positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is the way to convey the FTA of the Hearer's positive face that is divided into three groups of

subtypes: claim common ground (notice or attend to H's interest, exaggerate, intensify interest to H, used in group identity markers, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose or rise common ground, and joke), convey that speaker (S) and Hearer (H) are cooperators (assert speaker's knowledge of Hearer's want, offer or promise, be optimistic, include both speaker and Hearer in the activity, give or ask for a reason, and assert reciprocity), and fulfill Hearer's wants (giving gifts, goods, or human relations) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Then, Negative politeness conveys the FTA with redressive action that consists of five group sub-types: be direct (be conventionally indirect), do not presume or assume (question or hedge), communicate S's want to not impinge on Hearer (apologies, impersonalize speaker and Hearer, state the FTA as a general rule, nominalize), and redress other wants of Hearer's (go on record as incurring a debt) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, those are the types and the sub-types of politeness strategy.

Politeness strategy can be analyzed from the utterance or the text, and the researcher chooses to analyze politeness strategy through the film. The film is a work of art that contains pictures, videos, and text and displays acting in which the actresses play particular characters. The film is usually related to human life and can also be the place of language trends develop. The film entitled "Gifted" is chosen as the subject of this research because this film tells the story of a gifted child related to her education, parenting, and the essential mental health issues in education. Marc Web is the director of this film, with multiple productions behind it, one of them being TSG Entertainment Production. The four main characters become the subject of analysis in this research: Frank, Mary, Evelyn, and Bonnie. Therefore, the film entitled "Gifted" was used as the subject of this research.

There are previous researches that be the references for this research. Aditiya et al. (2021) examine the research to analyze the politeness strategy and the speech act in the pre-service teacher in EFL online class. The research found that there is more speech act found than politeness strategy. Wijaya et al. (2017) found in their research that politeness strategy can also be found or used by the shopkeeper at Tanah Lot, Bali, who mostly use record politeness strategy. Farhana (2021) examines research that analyses the politeness strategy in the film entitled "Enola Holmes" and found that 27% of main characters use positive politeness and 3% use negative politeness. Syah (2021) examines research analyzing politeness strategy in the talk show "Satu jam Lebih Dekat," and the result shows that seeking agreement in positive politeness is the politeness strategy that is mainly used in that talk show. (Creelman, 2022) conducted a study analyzing politeness strategy in the customer care agent discourse. Previous research above shows that politeness strategy can be found in various life fields. However, there is no previous research that analyses

the politeness strategy in the film entitled “Gifted”, which this film related to the use of politeness strategy in parenting and education.

The importance of politeness strategy in communication can be seen in how politeness strategy is analyzed in many aspects of human life. Then, analyzing politeness strategy in the film is still needed because film can also be a medium for learning a foreign language and may provide or give knowledge on the use of good communication. One of them is the use of the politeness strategy. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the politeness strategy applied by the main characters in the film entitled "Gifted".

1.2. Research questions

The study formulates two research questions, namely

1. What are the types of positive politeness strategies used by the main characters in the “Gifted” film?
2. What are the types of negative politeness strategies used by the main characters in the “Gifted” film?

1.3. Significance of the study

The result of the study is expected to give knowledge of how to build communication with other people. In addition, the results of the study can be used as examples in teaching Sociolinguistics in order to give authentic examples of politeness strategy.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

The research design used in this research is a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research design describes the data found in the research that is supported by relevant theory (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In collecting the data, the research uses one data collection technique, namely the audio-visual data collection technique. Creswell (2014) explained that audio-visual data is used to collect the data from video or audio. Then, the technique of this research by examining the film by watching it, collecting the utterance in the film to make the transcribe, and note-taking by taking the possible politeness strategies that appear in the film.

2.2. *Samples/Participants*

The subjects in this study involved the main characters in Gifted film consisting of four main characters: Frank, Mary, Evelyn, and Bonnie.

2.3. *Instruments*

Then, this research used three instruments to assist in data collection. First, the researcher is the first instrument because the researcher will collect and analyze the data until making a conclusion. Second, the screen recording or the screen capture using the application, namely Xbox Game Bar. Screen recording or capture is used to record the film, which can help collect the utterances from the movie. The third data instrument is a streaming instrument in the form of a table that helped the researcher to collect the data in the note-taking data collection

2.4. *Data analysis*

In order to analyze the data, Miles & Huberman (1994) used to analyze the data: data reduction, display, verification and conclusion. This study used one data triangulation, namely, theory triangulation. Two theories were used in analyzing politeness strategy by Yule (1996) and Brown and Levinson (1987).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Findings*

The film entitled “Gifted” is the subject of this research analyzing four main characters: Frank, Mary, Evelyn, and Bonnie. Both positive and negative politeness was found in this research, but dominate using positive politeness strategy in parenting and teaching. The politeness strategy analyses by determining the use of FTA by the characters and categorizing it into positive and negative politeness strategies depends on the positive or negative face of the hearer. The positive politeness strategy is divided into three groups that consist of positive politeness sub-types: claim common ground (32,43%), convey that speaker and hearer are cooperative (64,87%) and fulfill hearer want (2,79%). The negative politeness consists of five groups: be direct (39,13%), do not presume or assume (4,34%), do not coerce H (hearer) (13,04%), communicate H’s (hearers) want to not impinge on H (43,48%), and redress other wants of the hearer (0%).

The Types of Positive Politeness Strategy Used by the Main Characters

Positive politeness defines as the use of politeness strategy that appears because of the want of the speaker to convey the FTA to the hearer baldly with redressive action because of the hearer's positive face. Therefore, positive politeness can be said that the politeness strategy is applied because the hearer's positive face divides positive politeness into three groups, namely, claim common ground, convey that speaker and hearer are cooperators and fulfill the hearer's want.

1. Claim Common Ground

Claim common ground is using a positive politeness strategy where the speaker tries to be the same kind as the hearer. In order to claim common ground with the hearer, the speaker has eight ways to claim common ground: notice or attend to the hearer's want, exaggerate, intensify interest in the hearer, use group identity marker, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose or assert common ground, and joke. The following is the example of claim common ground, notice or attend on hearer's want spoken by Bonnie to Mary [00:05:35]:

“Good. Mary, can you stand up please? Stand on up. Stand up, babe. These questions are for you because you're so advanced. What is nine plus eight?”

The utterance “These questions are for you because you're so advanced” indicates that character Bonnie notices what Mary wants because Mary previously said that she thinks the math question is so easy for her. Bonnie tries to convey that FTA can damage her self-image of Mary which can cause Mary to feel embarrassed because she cannot answer the question and orders Mary to answer the difficult question by noticing what she wants “what is nine plus eight?”

2. Convey that Speaker and Hearer are Cooperators

The speaker can convey this strategy by asserting or presupposing the speaker's knowledge of the hearer's wants, offer or promise, being optimistic, including both speaker and hearer in the activity, giving or asking for the reason, and asserting reciprocity. The example of conveying that speaker and hearer are cooperators can be seen in the conversation between Frank to Mary [00:00:57]:

Frank : “Come on. I made you a special breakfast.”

Frank uses a positive politeness strategy and offers. He is offering a special breakfast to Mary. Frank tries to convince the FTA to order Mary to open the door. Mary shows a positive face to Frank of her wanting to be close to or accepted by Frank for not going to the school, and she closes

the door. Here, Frank also tries to make Mary cooperative and open the door and talk to him properly.

3. Fulfill Hearer's Want

In order to fulfilling hearer's, want the speaker can giving gift in the form of goods and human relation, such as giving understanding or compliment to the hearer. The example of giving gift in the form of human relation can be seen in the example below in the Frank utterance [01:28:51]:

Frank : "Because I thought I was bad for you. And then it dawned on me. If Mary is this amazing... smart, sweet human being... then I must be doing something right."

Frank gives compliments Mary. He tries to convey to the FTA that Frank is trying to tell the truth, which might threaten Mary's positive face of wanting to return home with Frank and not wanting to live with the new family again. Then, Frank adds positive politeness by complimenting Mary, saying, "*Mary is amazing..., smart, sweet human being...*". Therefore, Frank uses positive politeness giving human relations with Mary.

The Types of Negative Politeness Strategy Used by the Main Characters

Negative politeness is the type of politeness strategy that uses because of the negative face of the hearer and the want of the speaker to convey FTA with redressive action using on record or baldly. Negative politeness is divided into five groups that consist of the subtypes of negative politeness strategy, the group consists of: be direct, do not presume or assume, do not coerce H, and communicate H's want to not impinge on H.

1. Be Direct

In order to convey the FTA using on record because of the negative face of the hearer, the speaker need to convey the FTA and soften the FTA by convey it indirectly. Therefore, the subtypes of this negative politeness group, namely be conventionally indirect. The example of be conventionally indirect can be seen in the example below in the utterance spoken by Frank [00:33:10]:

Frank: "Her lawyer has a nice suit."

The utterance above is the example of Frank uses negative politeness strategy, be conventionally indirect. The utterance “*her lawyer has a nice suit*” literally does not mean that Evelyn’s lawyer wears a good suit and compliment that lawyer. However, it means that the lawyer looks professional rather than Frank’s lawyer and Frank convey it to show pessimism of his lawyer ability. In short, Frank judge people by the cover and pessimism that his lawyer has lower ability that Evelyn’s lawyer because of their appearance.

2. Do not Presume or Assume

The way to convey negative politeness is by avoiding presuming or assume the things that related to conveying the FTA. There is only one way no to presuming or assuming in negative politeness by deliver it using hedge. The example of the use of hedge in the film by the main characters the use of negative politeness can be seen spoken by the character Frank [00:11:57]:

Frank :” I can only guess. But I’ll tell you what, she would have wanted you to have friends.”

In the above utterance, Frank said “I can only guess...” that indicates as the use of hedge in negative politeness strategy to show that Frank carefully assumes on his opinion. Frank conveys the FTA to Mary to give an order to Mary to having friend and force Mary a little bit by using hedge in his opinion that Mary’s mother wants Mary to having friend.

3. Do not Coerce H

In negative politeness, the speaker use this strategy because of the negative face of the hearer where the hearer want to be free from the FTA of the speaker. However, the need of the speaker to convey that FTA make the speaker convey that FTA by do not coerce on the hearer by being pessimistic, minimize the imposition, and giving deference. The example of Bonnie using decrease the imposition can be seen in the utterance between Bonnie and Frank [00:08:30]:

Bonnie: “Okay. I don’t even wanna talk about that. I’ll keep you just a minute.”

The utterance spoken by Bonnie “I’ll keep you just a minute” indicate the use of decrease the imposition by Bonnie. That utterance categorizes as decrease the imposition because Bonnie wants to talk to Frank more bit longer about Mary gifted ability. However, Frank seems show negative face that Frank does not want to talk about Mary’s genius ability. Then, Bonnie tries to convey the

FTA of forcing Frank to stay a bit longer. Therefore, Bonnie uses decrease the imposition in her utterance to not coerce on Frank because the utterance “just” indicates that “a little bit” that hopefully make Frank want to stay because it is not that long.

4. Communicate H's (hearer's) want to not impinge on H

The negative politeness strategy that appears of negative face of the hearer where the hearer does not want to be impinge on the speaker make the negative politeness strategy appears, namely apologizing, Impersonalize S and H, state FTA as general rule, and nominalize. The example below show the use of subtype politeness strategy state FTA as general rule by the character Bonnie:

Bonnie : “It's the kind of school where students don't speak without permission.”

The above utterance “it's kind of school where students don't speak without permission” is the example of state FTA a general rule because Bonnie state that student cannot speak in the class without permission is a rule in that school. However, Bonnie also tries to convey the FTA to make Mary being quiet and does not response on the things that does not need to be response and make a noise.

3.2 Discussion

This film has four main characters: Frank, Mary, Evelyn, and Bonnie. The politeness strategies with children as family members generally use positive politeness strategies. In order to respond to Mary's curiosity, Frank usually uses a positive politeness strategy (giving a reason). Then, Frank also intensifies interest in Mary when Frank wants to give understanding to Mary. Frank conveys the FTA of Mary's behavior is not good by telling the stories related to Mary's bad behaviour. Evelyn mainly using positive politeness towards Mary and Frank as the majority of family members to reduce the distance. However, Clancy (2005) found that negative politeness among family members indicates that they barely understand each other or the extended family. Therefore, using the strategy of politeness between families, mainly positive politeness, shows that Frank and Mary are close to each other, and Evelyn uses positive politeness to reduce the distance.

The research done by Wardhana and Noermanzah (2021) found that the use of politeness strategy by the children mostly apologizing, promising, ordering, and asking permission from the elderly. However, the character Mary in this film mainly asks for a reason because the characteristic Mary, who is always curious about many things, is conventionally indirect in asking

permission to do something. As a child, Mary does not use negative politeness, apologizing that often to older people even when she shows a bad attitude toward the older people. Wardhana and Noermanzah (2021) found that children at an early age are not aware of apologizing because not most of them are aware of the distance and authority.

Bonnie uses politeness in teaching the young learner, mainly using the positive politeness strategy. In the learning process, teachers usually teach and make requests for the student. The teacher making the request usually uses negative politeness and is conventionally indirect (Myrset, 2022). However, Bonnie uses identity markers in making requests baldly in the classroom and avoids the use of "you" and "I" (impersonalize) to soften the request for the young learner. Then, Bonnie also uses a negative politeness strategy in handling students' misbehavior, namely stating the FTA as a general rule.

As a result, the politeness strategy in parenting by Frank and Evelyn is mostly a positive politeness strategy for Mary. Mary uses a positive politeness strategy with people already close to her, such as Frank. However, Mary uses negative politeness strategies against Evelyn because of their social distance (not as far as Mary's to Frank's). On the other hand, Bonnie mainly uses a positive politeness strategy in teaching young learners to make requests and giving orders. However, she uses negative politeness strategies in handling students' bad behavior.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, the types of politeness strategy by the main character in the "Gifted": Frank, Mary, Evelyn, and Bonnie mostly use positive politeness 37 data. Positive politeness strategy is categorized into three groups that can be found: claim common ground (Notice or attend to the hearer's wants, intensify interest to H, avoid disagreement, exaggerate, use in a group identity marker, seek agreement), convey that S and H are cooperators (assert S's knowledge on H want, offer or promise, be optimistic, include both S and H in an activity, and giving for a reason), and fulfill hearer's want (giving gift and giving human relation). Negative politeness applied by the main characters, 23 data. Four groups' categories of negative politeness can be found: be direct (be conventionally indirect), do not presume or assume (hedge), do not coerce the hearer (be pessimistic and decrease the imposition), and do not impinge on the hearer (apologize, impersonalize S and H, and state FTA as a general rule).

4.2. Suggestions

It is suggested that teachers consider the use of politeness strategy in the classroom since it can build effective communication between speakers and listeners. In addition, other researchers

are expected to conduct a study in using the politeness strategy in the real domain of family, friendship, neighborhood, or school.

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