

A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies in “Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck”

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Abstract

Politeness is to convey an expression as pleasantly as possible, which is necessary to reduce conflict with others. As a result, being polite is essential because it allows people to express themselves without offending others. The aim of this study is to examine the strategies of politeness utilized in the movie "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck" based on Brown and Levinson's theory (1987). This study employs a descriptive qualitative design in order to explain the many forms of politeness used by the characters in the film. According to the findings of this study, it found 14 occurrences spanning four categories of politeness strategies as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987). Specifically, the study found 4 cases of positive politeness, 3 instances of negative politeness, 4 instances of bald-on-record strategies, and 3 instances of off-record strategies. The politeness mentioned in the speech is beneficial, considering the film is about a cultural romance in a rural area of Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: *Politeness; Study; Strategies*

Abstrak

Kesantunan adalah untuk menyampaikan ekspresi senyaman mungkin, yang diperlukan untuk mengurangi konflik dengan orang lain. Oleh karena itu, bersikap sopan sangat penting karena memungkinkan orang untuk mengekspresikan diri mereka sendiri tanpa menyinggung perasaan orang lain. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji strategi kesantunan yang digunakan dalam film "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck" berdasarkan teori Brown dan Levinson (1987). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif untuk menjelaskan berbagai bentuk kesantunan yang digunakan oleh para tokoh dalam film tersebut. Berdasarkan temuan dari penelitian ini, ditemukan 14 kejadian yang mencakup empat kategori strategi kesopanan seperti yang didefinisikan oleh Brown dan Levinson (1987). Secara khusus, penelitian ini menemukan 4 kasus kesopanan positif, 3 contoh kesopanan negatif, 4 contoh strategi bald-on-record, dan 3 contoh strategi off-record. Kesantunan yang disebutkan dalam tuturan tersebut bermanfaat, mengingat film ini bercerita tentang romansa budaya di daerah pedesaan di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: *Kesantunan; Studi; Strategi*

1. Introduction

A lot of researchers have defined politeness differently. According to Watts (2003), politeness is 'political behavior', which he defines as behavior regulated by sociocultural norms that tries to develop and/or preserve stability in personal relationships between people in society through contact. According to Spolsky (1998), politeness is defined as the language used by the speaker to respect the other participants in the dialog. Politeness is demonstrated by doing something that makes the participant feel good, expressing gratitude for what the participant

has done, or refraining from saying anything that will make the interlocutor feel degraded.

In addition, as explained by Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness involves awareness of the wishes of others. Based on this definition, politeness can occur anywhere in daily activities. According to Afriana and Mandala (2018), when someone is talking, it is considered polite for someone to employ respectful phrases, avoid direct mocking, and show respect for others. For example, in a phenomenon in a conversation when someone gives encouragement and compliment so that

one's goals can be achieved with the following words:

“You did an amazing job on the project; I could see how much effort you put into it!”
(Afriana & Mandala, 2018)

The statement, "You did an amazing job on the project; I could see how much effort you put into it" is an example of positive politeness. It employs a direct compliment to acknowledge and appreciate the recipient's efforts, so fostering rapport and strengthening social relationships. By emphasizing the effort and quality of the job, the speaker expresses unity and respect, making the receiver feel appreciated and acknowledged.

Positive politeness strategies, which emphasize kindness and mutual respect, are essential for managing social interactions. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined positive politeness as procedures that make the interlocutor feel valued and respected, therefore sustaining social ties. For example, in their study of politeness theory, they discuss how speakers communicate solidarity and intimacy through compliments, in-group language, and shared experiences. This method is especially useful in situations where preserving harmonious relationships is critical, such as in close-knit communities or cooperative work environments.

Negative politeness strategies, on the other hand, are used to avoid interfering with the interlocutor's independence and to demonstrate respect for their autonomy. Brown and Levinson (1987) also mention negative politeness as a method to reduce possible dangers to a person's face by limiting imposition and demonstrating deference. This method is frequently utilized in formal or hierarchical settings where keeping a respectful distance is essential. For example, as demonstrated by their vast study on politeness tactics in numerous linguistic contexts, requesting something with hedging or indirect language can assist reduce the listener's stress.

Nowadays, people can easily find politeness when watching cinema. Locher (2004) emphasized that films and other audiovisual materials serve as rich sources for examining how politeness is negotiated in everyday interactions. Movies frequently reflect and shape contemporary conventions and expectations surrounding interpersonal communication. Movies offer a rich tapestry of politeness methods through expertly produced dialogues and exchanges, demonstrating both good and negative politeness in a variety of social circumstances. This image not only

reflects real-life communication patterns, but it also shapes viewer attitudes toward civility and manners in society. This can be proven in another phenomenon in the conversation between characters in the movie "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck" where Aziz started the opening of the letter with the following sentence:

“Saudaraku Zainuddin, dengan perasaan sangat duka, kota Surabaya saya tinggalkan”.

The respectful address "Saudaraku" (My dear), reflects an effort to handle the message with care. This approach demonstrates deference and respect toward the recipient, ensuring that the communication is as considerate and empathetic as possible.

2. Literature Riview

Politeness strategy is an important paradigm for studying how people manage social interactions and keep face in communication. Based on Yule's (1996) theory of politeness, politeness strategies are essential in communication as they focus on minimizing imposition and respecting the listener's need for autonomy. These strategies aim to reduce potential threats to the listener's "negative face," which is the desire to be unimpeded and free from imposition. "Face" in politeness theory refers to an individual's self-esteem or emotional needs in social interactions. The concept originates from the work of Erving Goffman (1967), who described face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for themselves" in social encounters. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness methods are adopted to mitigate social threats and regulate interpersonal relationships.

Brown and Levinson (1987) divide politeness methods into four categories: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off-record. Each kind provides a distinct way to controlling face-threatening acts (FTAs) in communication, depending on the context, relationship, and amount of possible threat to the listener's face.

Positive politeness improves the listener's positive face, which represents their desire to be liked, admired, or approved of. Holmes (1995) discussed the use of compliments as a positive politeness strategy. An example she provides is:

“You’ve done a great job with this report. I really appreciate the effort you’ve put into it.”

This example illustrates how positive politeness is used to acknowledge and appreciate someone's effort, thereby enhancing their positive face and fostering good relationships. These methods include expressing friendship, approval, or unity in order to make the listener feel respected and appreciated. Positive politeness is commonly utilized in informal settings or among people who have a close relationship.

Negative politeness, on the other hand, are employed to respect the listener's unfavorable facial expression, which represents their desire for autonomy and independence from intrusion. Beebe (1995) examined how negative politeness strategies are used to minimize the imposition on the listener and maintain social harmony. An example from her research is:

"I was wondering if you might be able to help me with this task, but if you're too busy, I completely understand."

This example demonstrates negative politeness by using tentative language ("I was wondering if you might be able") and acknowledging the listener's possible constraints, thus reducing the perceived pressure or intrusion of the request. These methods are generally more formal and indirect, with the goal of reducing imposition or potential offense. Hedging, apologies, and oblique language are common strategies used to soften requests or demands. Negative politeness is frequently used in situations requiring social distance or in conversations with unequal power relations.

The bald-on record strategy entails direct communication without any politeness strategies. In this method, the speaker's goal is communicated directly and brutally, with minimal regard for the listener's expression. Bald-on record strategies are commonly utilized in circumstances of urgency, where clarity is essential or whenever there is a close connection that allows for transparency without risking offense. According to Leech (1983), bald on record strategies involve making direct and unambiguous statements or requests without concern for politeness. For example:

"I need those files now."

This statement is direct and unambiguous, explicitly stating the need without any softening or mitigating language.

Off record is an indirect method that depends on inference rather than directly declarations. This method enables the speaker to offer a hint at their meaning, allowing for alternative interpretations and lowering the potential of a face-threatening act. Off-the-record methods frequently include the use of hints, analogies, or rhetorical questions, allowing the speaker to avoid taking direct responsibility for the imposition or request. Herbert (1990) discussed how off record strategies involve using indirect language to make requests or statements, allowing the speaker to avoid imposing directly and to provide the listener with the opportunity to interpret the meaning. For example

"It's getting late, and I have a lot of work to do."

This statement suggests that the speaker might need to leave or needs assistance without explicitly stating it, relying on the listener to infer the underlying request or intention.

In this research, three previous studies related to politeness strategies were reviewed. The first study by Son and Afriana (2023) analyzed positive politeness strategies used in a YouTube video titled "Ariana Grande I Full Video," focusing on the occurrence of positive politeness phenomena as described by Brown and Levinson (1987) within the scope of pragmatics. The researchers found 68 instances of positive politeness spread across ten different strategies, demonstrating how positive politeness can be used to maintain harmony in communication between speakers and hearers.

The second study by Afrina et al. (2023) explored negative politeness strategies in English business letters from companies in Batam, Indonesia. This study concentrated specifically on pessimistic strategies, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), using a descriptive qualitative approach. The researchers identified nine instances of negative politeness strategies aimed at minimizing threats to the receiver's face in business correspondence.

The third study by Safitri and Ambalegin (2023) examined various politeness strategies used in the movie script "17 Again." The research employed Brown and Levinson's framework and found a distribution of strategies including positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off record

strategies. This study highlighted how these strategies were contextually applied in the interactions between characters to either enhance solidarity or create social distance.

However, this present research has its own uniqueness as it uses the classic Indonesian movie "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck" as a data source and focuses on the pragmatics approach to analyze politeness strategies within literary dialogues. This analysis emphasizes how politeness is strategically employed by characters in various social and cultural contexts in the movie, providing insights into the underlying cultural values and social norms.

3. METHOD

The researchers used a qualitative approach in their study, focusing on textual data and outcomes presented through words and sentences. Creswell (2014) emphasized that qualitative research is highly suitable for analyzing politeness strategies in films because it allows for in-depth exploration of language use, context, and social dynamics. According to Miles et al. (2014), qualitative approaches require examining data provided in the form of words, sentences, or phrases. The data was collected using Sudaryanto's (2015) observational method, starting with a study of the source material, which comprised of company communications. The researchers copied lines from these letters and then looked for parts with the types of politeness. This strategy required the use of descriptive qualitative methodologies to assess the textual material. The researchers analyzed the data using pragmatic principles from Sudaryanto (2015) and used an equalizing strategy to reconcile the findings with the theoretical framework proposed by Brown and Levinson.

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1 Findings

This section represents the types through politeness expressions found in the movie "Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck".

Table 1. Data Findings

Types	Utterances	Frequency
Positive Face	1. "Saya akan jujur kepadamu."	4
	2. "Asalkan kau sudi memaafkan segenap kesalahanku."	

Types	Utterances	Frequency
	3. "Saya akan tetap di sini bersamamu... Saya butuh dekat dengan kau."	
	4. "Maka itu, secara seorang sahabat, bahkan secara seorang saudara, saya akan kembali teguh memegang janjiku dalam persahabatan itu."	
Negative Face	5. "Saya sudi mengambil cobaan yang menimpa diriku."	3
	6. "Maaf... Kau regas segenap pucuk pengharapanku."	
	7. "Ongkos pulangmu akan saya beri demikian pun uang yang kau perlukan."	
Bald on Record	8. "Tidak. Pantang pisang berbuah dua kali. Pantang pemuda makan sisa."	4
	9. "Kau mesti pulang kembali ke Padang."	
	10. "Kau kawin dengan dia... Kau sendiri yang bilang padaku bahwa perkawinan itu bukan paksaan orang lain tetapi pilihan hati kau sendiri."	
	11. "Biar saya kau hinakan, biar saya kau pandang sebagai babu yang hina."	
Off Record	12. "Tetapi kemudian kau berpaling ke yang lebih gagah, kaya raya, berbangsa, beradat, berlembaga, berketurunan."	3

Types	Utterances	Frequency
	13. "Hampir saya mati menanggung cinta, Hayati."	
	14. "Saya tidak akan pulang. Saya akan tetap di sini bersamamu."	

4.2 Analysis

Positive Face Strategies:

1. "Saya akan jujur kepadamu."

Here, Hayati used a straightforward statement to establish trust and transparency. By committing to honesty, she was appealing to Zaenudin's positive face, hoping that this openness will foster a sense of mutual respect and approval.

2. "Asalkan kau sudi memaafkan segenap kesalahanku."

Hayati was seeking forgiveness and attempting to show humility. She acknowledged her mistakes and requests Zaenudin's approval by asking for his forgiveness. This is a positive politeness strategy where she appeals to Zaenudin's sympathy and willingness to restore their relationship.

3. "Saya akan tetap di sini bersamamu... Saya butuh dekat dengan kau."

Hayati appealed to Zaenudin's positive face by expressing her need and desire to stay close to him. This expression of vulnerability and dependence is meant to appeal to Zaenudin's sense of kindness and affection, reinforcing their bond and showing her desire for ongoing support and closeness.

4. "Maka itu, secara seorang sahabat, bahkan secara seorang saudara, saya akan kembali teguh memegang janjiku dalam persahabatan itu."

Zaenudin emphasized his role as a friend and even as a brother, showing his commitment to maintaining a positive relationship despite their past. By framing his actions as fulfilling a promise of friendship and respect, he appeals to Hayati's positive face. He's trying to honor his past feelings and obligations, which reflects a deep sense of integrity and respect for their relationship.

Negative Face Strategies:

5. "Saya sudi mengambil cobaan yang menimpa diriku."

Hayati indicated her willingness to endure difficulties. By doing this, she was demonstrating respect for Zaenudin's autonomy and decision-making. She's essentially saying that she was willing to accept the consequences of her actions without imposing further burdens on him, thus minimizing the impact on his freedom.

6. "Maaf... Kau regas segenap pucuk pengharapanku."

Zaenudin began with an apology ("Maaf") to acknowledge the potential discomfort his forthcoming words might cause. This use of an apology is a negative politeness strategy to soften the impact of his critique and to show consideration for Hayati's feelings, recognizing that his words might be perceived as harsh.

7. "Ongkos pulangmu akan saya beri demikian pun uang yang kau perlukan."

Zaenudin offered financial assistance for Hayati's return journey and additional support. This gesture respects Hayati's need for independence and avoids imposing further on her. By providing for her needs, he minimized the inconvenience and potential burden of her departure, showing respect for her autonomy while addressing the practical aspects of her leaving.

Bald on Record:

8. "Tidak. Pantang pisang berbuah dua kali. Pantang pemuda makan sisa."

Zaenudin used direct language to reject Hayati's plea. This phrase, which translates to "No. It is taboo for bananas to bear fruit twice. It is taboo for a youth to eat leftovers," is a blunt way of saying that he will not accept her back. It's a clear and unequivocal refusal.

9. "Kau mesti pulang kembali ke Padang."

Zaenudin explicitly instructed Hayati to return to her hometown, without any softening language. This direct command demonstrates a bald-on-record approach, leaving no room for ambiguity.

10. "Kau kawin dengan dia... Kau sendiri yang bilang padaku bahwa perkawinan itu

bukan paksaan orang lain tetapi pilihan hati kau sendiri."

Zaenudin directly referenced Hayati's past choices and her decision to marry someone else. This is a straightforward, unfiltered way of addressing her decisions and their consequences.

11. "Biar saya kau hinakan, biar saya kau pandang sebagai babu yang hina."

Hayati directly accepted being humiliated or regarded as lowly for the sake of staying close to Zaenudin. This statement is blunt and unambiguous, showing her willingness to endure personal degradation if it means being near Zaenudin. Her directness underscores her desperation and commitment to maintaining a relationship, regardless of the cost to her self-esteem.

Off Record Strategies:

12. "Tetapi kemudian kau berpaling ke yang lebih gagah, kaya raya, berbangsa, beradat, berlembaga, berketurunan."

Zaenudin indirectly criticized Hayati's choice of a wealthier and higher-status partner. Instead of directly accusing her of being materialistic, he implied it through descriptive language, allowing her to interpret the criticism in a less confrontational manner.

13. "Hampir saya mati menanggung cinta, Hayati."

Zaenudin conveyed his intense emotional pain and suffering indirectly. He did not explicitly blame Hayati but instead implies that her actions caused him significant distress. This off-record statement hints at his emotional turmoil without directly confronting Hayati about it.

14. "Saya tidak akan pulang. Saya akan tetap di sini bersamamu."

Hayati's insistence on staying despite Zaenudin's clear instructions can be seen as an off-record strategy. While she directly states her intention to remain, the underlying message is a plea for Zaenudin to reconsider his stance and a way of expressing her emotional attachment and need for his presence. It's a more indirect way of communicating her resistance to his rejection and her hope for reconciliation.

5. CONCLUSION

Politeness strategies are used to guarantee that communication procedures and outcomes promote comfort and collaboration among individuals. This study investigated and assessed multiple strategies, with a thorough discussion of the results. It found 14 occurrences spanning four categories of politeness strategies as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987). Specifically, the study found 4 cases of positive politeness, 3 instances of negative politeness, 4 instances of bald-on-record strategies, and 3 instances of off-record strategies.

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