

# Politeness Strategies in Directives Speech Acts Found in Daily Conversations among Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the kinds of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy among the senior high school and how they use those strategies in their daily conversations. In this study applied Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy. This study was a qualitative approach using descriptive method. The subject was the Senior High School Daarul Huda. The source of the data is the students' spoken expressions which the writer transcribes into conversational texts. The researcher observed the students' speaking classes, came to their classes before lecturing, and went to their boarding houses. Their conversation were recorded and transcribed. Then, data was analyzed based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy. The result showed there were 166 utterances of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy that were used by the students in their daily conversations. These are a bald on-record strategy, a positive politeness strategy, a negative politeness strategy, an off-record strategy and a do not do FTA/ keep the quiet strategy.

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## Introduction

Basically, humans are social beings. They cannot live alone. In order to survive and get their needs, they communicate to others [1]. Communication is the process of transmitting

one's messages to others. Ref. [2] said to convey the message in communication; human beings use language, either verbal or non-verbal language. Verbal language is the spoken one. Speech is its example. Non-verbal language is such language like gesture, writing, drawing, and expressions of face [3].

Politeness is an important thing to generate good communication between a speaker and an addressee. There are some strategies used in an utterance to produce meaningful communication and to respect the addressee. Ref. [4] stated that "politeness strategy is used not only to respect the addressee but also to avoid the facethreatening act (FTA)". Face Threatening Act is an act that is threatening the face of the addressee because of feeling bad things by the speaker's utterance. Ref. [5] stated that "Politeness, in an interaction, can be sharpened as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face. Ref. [6] stated "In pragmatics, politeness is a way to reverence the "face" or image of someone. In utterance, politeness is an essential concept to emerge so that the image or face of the speaker is looked well and to keep the listener being respected. Ref. [7] stated that "politeness is an act of avoiding and managing the speech act threatening addressees and speaker's faces (Face Threatening Acts)". The face can be simply outlined as an image of someone. The face concepts will always be talked about when explaining politeness. Ref. [5] said that "Face indicates the public self-image of a person". Ref. [8] divided the face into two kinds: negative and positive face [9]. Negative face is a desire of someone not to be disturbed by others, to be independent and to have the freedom to act. Positive face means the desire of someone to be respected and accepted by others. Ref. [5] stated that "If a speaker says something that denotes a threat to another individual's expectation regarding self-image, it is described as a face-threatening act". This statement shows that politeness strategy is important to do so that the image (face) of the speaker and listener can be treasured. For example, in a meeting, an employer does not agree with the leader's opinion, so he should use the FTA. The employer could interrupt the leader's opinion by saying: "I wonder whether I could just short of asking you a little question"? The politeness that he shows is negative politeness. The speech in the students' Daarul Huda Islamic boarding school is when Ali did not like his friend's comment (Ranjeet), he said: "Oh, you are changing tone". A Politeness strategy is a strategy used to escape or reduce the effect of the image caused by face-threatening acts that are done by the speaker. Ref. [4] defined four strategies of politeness; bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record.

## **Methods**

This research is a discourse study that focuses on pragmatics. In this research, the writers emphasize more on politeness strategies usage in directive speech acts. The method used in this research is a descriptive method using a qualitative approach [10]. The writer uses

the theory of Brown and Levinson as a basic theory to analyze the kind of politeness strategies in directive speech acts because most of the conversation is directive speech acts.

The data source in this research is students' Daarul Huda Islamic Boarding School Banjar. The sample of data was taken from script directive speech acts the whole senior high students' Daarul Huda Islamic Boarding School. The writer used a purposive sampling technique. It's mean the sample is taken in particular deliberation [10] and only directive speech acts as the sample because the directive speech act represents the politeness strategy's criteria of Brown and Levinson. Politeness strategies include bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record. There are 166 utterances occurred. The writer found 166 which are categorized as directive speech acts. It means that those 166 utterances are used as the sample to be analyzed based on politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson.

The analysis was done by collecting the directive speech acts as the data and giving the code for each directive speech act. This code-giving technique was used to make the writer easier to identify the politeness strategy used by the whole students. The code (1) is used for bald on record, (2) for positive politeness, and (3) for negative politeness. The data analyses in the script of Patton [11]. In using methods, trustworthiness is obtained by using several sources with the same methods. The third kind of triangulation is by using other researcher or colleague to recheck trustworthiness. This way will help the researcher to reduce mistakes while collecting the data. The last is by using theories. Ref. [11] states that this way can be done by rival explanation.

## **Results**

This chapter presents the results of data analysis and the discussion of research findings. The discussion of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy is divided into five sections. The first section is the discussion of bald on record strategy. The second section is the discussion of positive politeness strategy. The third section is the discussion of negative politeness strategy. The next section is the discussion of off-record strategy and the last section is the discussion of do not do FTA strategy. In each strategy, the discussion is divided into sub strategies. Not all utterances are discussed. For each sub strategy, I only take some utterances to be discussed because they have similarities.

After analyzing the data which were taken from the daily conversations done by the fourth semester students of the English Department, I found 166 utterances of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies that were used. These strategies consist of sixty five utterances of bald on record strategy, forty utterances of positive politeness strategy, forty six utterances of negative politeness strategy, ten utterances of off-record strategy and five utterances of do not do FTA strategy. These all strategies can be described on Table 1.

**Table 1.** Case findings

<b>No</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Freq.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>BALD ON RECORD</b>	
	In the Case of Urgent Situation	4
	In the Case S emphasizes his word	1
	In the Case Task Orientation	28
	Giving Advice	11
	Welcoming	13
	Offering	8
<b>2</b>	<b>POSITIVE POLITENESS</b>	
	Noticing	4
	Exaggerating	3
	Using in Group Identity Markers	3
	Seeking Agreement	1
	Avoiding Disagreement	1
	Offering, Promising	4
	Being Optimistic	2
	Including Both S and H in the Activity.	16
	Giving (or Asking for) Reasons	6
<b>3</b>	<b>NEGATIVE POLITENESS</b>	
	Being Conventionally Indirect	22
	Questioning, Hedging	4
	Minimizing Imposition	4
	Giving Deference	3
	Apologizing	5
	Impersonalizing the S and the H	1
	Stating the FTA as a General Rule	6
	Going on Record or Incurring a Debt or as not Indebting the H	1
<b>4</b>	<b>OFF-RECORD</b>	
	Giving Hints	6
	Giving Association Clues	3
	Overstate	1
<b>5</b>	<b>DO NOT DO FTA/KEEP QUITE</b>	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>166</b>

## Discussion

This study intends to describe the ways in which the students use Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in their daily conversations. The following are the discussions of each strategy which is arranged based on Table 1. Some of the findings are discussed here.

### A. Bald on Record

Humans use bald on record when they think that it is not necessary to redress other's face as the effect of FTAs. This case happens among close friends or people who have higher status. In the data, I found sixty five utterances of bald on record strategy. These all utterances belong to two cases, forty four utterances were the case of non-minimization of the face threat and the others were the case of FTA-oriented bald on record usage.

#### 1. Case of Non-Minimization of the Face Threat

In this case, there are some occasions where S forced not to speak politely. In urgent situation, in the situation where S emphasizes his words, S has higher status than H,

recipes and instruction are the examples of this case. These all situations were applied in students' daily conversation. Some of the examples are below:

2. In the Case of Urgent Situation

In the case of urgent situation, it is unnecessary to use politeness strategy. When people get into urgent situation, they do not have time to think about politeness. The students made utterances in this case four times. Some of them are:

(1) B : OK... OK... I will five minutes... oh... **give me five minutes!** [Transcription 5 line 29]

In utterance (1), S and H were classmates. S who borrowed H's book asked H to give her some minutes to take the book in her boarding house. Because they would have a class at that time, S was in hurry. She could not make this utterance polite. Yet, it was alright since in urgent situation face redress could be ignored.

3. In the Case S Emphasizes his Word?

In this case, S provides metaphorical urgency for emphasis. S speaks as if maximum efficiency is very important. This expression is usually found in attention-getters in conversation. The students utilized this expression once, that is:

(1) J : I don't have enough money... **look** at my purse, it's empty! [Transcription 26 line 7]

Citation (1) happened between senior and junior in the same boarding house. The junior was the subject of the data. S emphasized her word by saying "look." This word indicated that S wanted to get H's attention because she did not have any money and she wanted to borrow H's motorcycle to go to the *ATM* to take money.

4. Giving Advice

An advice is usually conveyed immediately. Face redress is also unnecessary to use in this case. The fourth semester students of English Department used this strategy eleven times. Here are three examples of them:

(4) B : At 3... **and don't forget to bring your helmet!**  
[Transcription 4 line 18]

## B. Case of FTA-Oriented Bald on Record Usage

The case of FTA-oriented bald on record usage is actually oriented to face. In this case both S and H attempt to respect each face, so that each participant attempts to foresee what the other participant is attempting to foresee. This case was also found in students' daily conversation in the form of welcoming and offering. I found thirteen utterances of welcoming strategy and eight utterances of offering strategy.

1. Welcoming

In *welcoming* S insists that H may impose on his negative face. In this case, when S says an utterance, he will consider who actually his H is. For instance:

(5) P : And now the last... **Ok!**  
[Transcription 15 line 13]

2. Offering

In offering, S insists that H may impose on S's negative face. S does not want H insult his freedom. In the data, the students used this strategy eight times. Two of them are:

(6) P : **Second question?!**  
[Transcription 15 line 8]

Citation (12) happens in formal discussion where the presenter offered her classmates to ask the second question. She offered it because her classmates were silent. She did not wish for being insulted because of her friends' silence.

In the data, bald on record was the strategy that was mostly used by the students. It might be because the strategy provided no effort to redress someone's face, so it was the easiest strategy used. However, the students should also consider their hearer when they talked to someone, whether they talked to their friends or their senior.

### C. Positive Politeness

When people try to redress someone's positive face, it means they use positive politeness. In this strategy, S respects H's wants. This wants should be thought of as desirable. The students used positive politeness strategy forty times. It consists of two ways: claiming common ground was found sixteen times and convey that S and H are cooperators was found twenty four times.

This type indicates that S and H both belong to a group of persons who share the same wants, and have the same goal. It means that S place himself in the same position with H. The students used this strategy in various ways including noticing, exaggerating, using in group identity markers, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, offering and promising

1. Noticing

In this strategy, S takes notice of H's condition as the result of his desire that S and H both belong to the same group who share the same wants. For example:

(7) B : ... **"It's better for you to not attend the course!"** ... [Transcription 14 line 6]

2. Using in Group Identity Markers

Another way to show positive politeness is by calling H's identity markers. In students' daily conversations, I found three utterances reflected this strategy. They are:

(8) B : Oh... common *girl*. I just borrow it. [Transcription 27 line 10]

### 3. Seeking Agreement

The case of S tries to seek agreement from H is another way to show positive politeness. The students produced this strategy once. It could be seen in utterance below:

(9) A : We have a duty *right*? We have to find a property for ESA week.  
B : *Yes... and I think that we have to finish it this day...*  
[Transcription 20 line 7-8]

In citation (22), S and H had the same duty. S tried to seek agreement by asking question "We have a duty right?" to H. It means that S needed to be sure of her duty. She asked H to fix it. Then, H made her believe that they had to finish their job as soon as possible.

### 4. Avoiding Disagreement

If S tries to avoid disagreement, he also does positive politeness strategy. This strategy is the effort of softening disagreement of someone's utterances. For example:

(10) Q : Can you explain about how the government solves that problem?  
P : *I think I will answer your question first.*  
[Transcription 15 line 67]

### 5. Offering Promising

Offering in positive politeness strategy is different from offering in bald on record strategy. In positive politeness, offering is more polite because S delivers offering indirectly by noticing on H's face. It could be seen in utterance below:

(11) B : OK, I borrow one and *you can borrow it from me.* [Transcription 3 line 8]

In this case, S and H were close friends. H wanted to borrow S's dictionary because she did not have dictionary. Citation (24) showed that S offered her dictionary after she knew that H found difficult word.

### 6. Being optimistic

Being optimistic is another way of showing positive politeness strategy. S is optimist that H wants to help him. The students used this strategy twice. They are:

(12) B : So, you will go with me tomorrow, *will you?*  
[Transcription 8 line 9]

In citation (28), S and H were friends. S asked H to watch “*Ayat-Ayat Cinta*” in the theater. S was optimistic that H wanted to go with her. By emphasizing her words, she assumed H would do what she wanted to do.

## Conclusion

The senior high school used Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategy in 166 utterances which were divided into five ways. They were sixty five utterances of bald on record strategy, forty utterances of positive politeness strategy, forty six utterances of negative politeness strategy, ten utterances of off-record strategy and five utterances of do not do FTA strategy. Bald on record strategy was the strategy that was mostly used. It is because the strategy provides no effort to redress someone’s face, so it was the easiest strategy used. However, the students should also consider their hearer when they talked to someone, whether they talked to their friends or their senior. In positive politeness, the students asked H to do the same activity together with them. They were also optimist that their friend will do their wants. This strategy made them getting closer to H easily. In negative politeness, when the students talked to someone, they had to keep their H’s autonomy. This strategy is considered as the second most used strategy by the students. In off-record strategy, the students used hints and clues to H and let H interpreted what they intended to do. This strategy might be unfamiliar to students. The weakness of this strategy is if H failed to interpret the right message of S’s utterance, conflict could happen. Do not do FTA/keep quiet strategy was considered as the most unfamiliar strategy for students. For human being, the desire of communication could not be stopped. If they did this strategy, they stopped their desire to communicate. Because of that reason, the students were rarely used this strategy. In the future, it necessary to make more complete research about politeness. The subject of the data could be taken from all levels of English Department students, so various ways of politeness strategy could be found. Besides that, the other researchers could use other politeness theories instead of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors should declare that there is no conflict of interest.

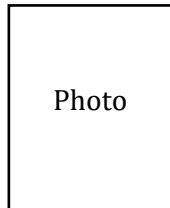
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