

## **A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies Reflected in American Teenager's Movie 21 Jump Street**

Dede Jihan Rasika

*English Education/ The University of Lampung, Indonesia*

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**Abstract:** *Politeness has turned out to be one of the real topics in late pragmatic research. Cruse (2006: 131) states that politeness is a matter of minimizing the negative effects of what one says on the feelings of others and maximizing the positive effects. This paper aims at probing the types of politeness strategies employed by the main characters in 21 jump street movie and describing the way politeness strategies are realized in the utterances employed by the main characters in 21 jump street movie. This research employed descriptive qualitative approach. The data of the research were dialogues among the main characters in which utterances containing politeness strategies in the movie. Based on the findings and discussion, the results of the research can be concluded that there are four types of politeness strategies employed by the main characters in 21 jump street movie. Bald on record strategy is the most frequent strategy that occurs followed by off record strategy that occurs, Negative politeness strategy and positive politeness strategy. After being understood about the strategies, the researcher hopes that those strategies will not be applied when having interaction with elderly or honored people.*

**Keywords:** *Keywords: Politeness strategy, Pragmatic, 21 jump street movie*

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### **I. Introduction**

Politeness has turned out to be one of the real topics in late pragmatic research. According Yule (1998: 60), politeness is characterized as an approach to indicate attention to someone else's open mental self view. With Yule, Cruse (2006: 131) states that politeness is a matter of minimizing the negative effects of what one says on the feelings of others and maximizing the positive effects. Watts (2003: 9) clarifies pleasantness as a thing that isn't born with individuals. It is something individuals need to learn and be associated into, and no generation has been of short teachers and handbooks on etiquette and "correct behavior" to help people acquire politeness skills. He additionally portrays that Brown and Levinson see politeness as a complex system for softening face-threatening acts. They analyze politeness and say that in order to enter into social relationship, people have to acknowledge and show awareness of the face, the public self-image, the sense of self, and the addressee.

In pragmatics, politeness is concerned with "...ways in which the relational function in linguistic action is expressed" (Kasper in Barron, 2003: 15). In other words, it concerns how language is employed in a strategic way to achieve such aims as supporting or maintaining interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, politeness not only indicates a pragmatics concept but also signifies a lay concept and a sociolinguistic concept. The lay concept of politeness relates to an appropriate social behavior and good respect of others. The etiquette book designed for different cultures is the one of its examples. In contrast, politeness as a sociolinguistic concept is concerned with obligatory signals of respect or familiarity, which derive from such characteristics as age, sex, family position and social position.

Central of many politeness approaches is the concept of 'face'. Face in Brown and Levinson's model is a theoretical construct which they claim they have taken from the work of Erving Goffman (Watts, 2003: 85). Goffman in Bousfield (2008: 33) defines face as being: [...] the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. Yule (1998: 60) defines face as a public self-image of a person. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. In order to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationship and ensure successful social interaction, people should be aware of another one's face. According to Black (2006: 72), Brown and Levinson consider that 'face' has two aspects:

**a) Negative face:** the right to get freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

**b) Positive face:** the need to be appreciated by others, and to maintain a positive self-image.

For example, when someone asks to get a pen from someone else, if he/she

applies negative face, he/she says "Could you lend me a pen?" In the other hands, if he/she wants to show his/her positive face, he/she can say "How about letting me to use your pen?"

In everyday conversation, it is often found a person expects that their public self-image will be respected or face wants. Yule (1998: 61) explains that if the speaker says something to lessen the possible threat from another's face, it is called a face saving act. A face saving act which is oriented to the person's negative face– that will tend to show deference, emphasize the importance of the other's time or concerns, and even include an apology for the imposition or interruption– is called negative politeness. Whereas, a face saving act which is concerned with the person's positive face– that will tend to show solidarity, emphasize that both speakers want the same thing, and they have a common goal– is called positive politeness (Yule, 1998:62).

On the other hands, the utterances or actions to lessen the threat of another's face are called face saving act, while the threat that is given to another individual's self-image is called Face-Threatening Act or FTA (Yule, 1998: 61). This act avoids the freedom of actions (negative face) and states someone's wish to be wanted by others (positive face). In an attempt to avoid FTA's, the interlocutors use specific strategies to minimize the threat according to a rational assessment of the face risk to the participants.

To this end, the present study aimed at investigating the types of politeness strategies employed by the main characters in 21 jump street movie and describing the way politeness strategies are realized in the utterances employed by the main characters in 21 jump street movie.

**Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies**

In any society, there are several rules and principles that regulate how people speak and behave. Brown and Levinson offer a descriptive analysis of strategies used by the participants to maintain their respective faces in social interaction. In Bousfield (2008: 57-59), Brown and Levinson sum up human politeness behaviour in five strategies: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and no FTA strategy.

#### a) Bald-on Record

In this strategy, FTA is performed "[...] in the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way possible" (Brown and Levinson in Bousfield, 2008: 57). To do so 'baldly' entails phrasing it in direct, honest terms with no attempt to soften the face-threatening trust. The bald on-record does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's 'face.' Here, there is no attempt to acknowledge the hearer's face wants. This type of strategy is commonly found in people who know each other very well, and who are very comfortable in their environments, such as a close friend and family. And in applying this strategy, someone can utilize its five sub-strategies. They are showing disagreement (criticism), giving suggestion/advice, requesting, warning; threatening, and using imperative form.

#### b) Positive Politeness

Positive face refers to every individual's basic desire for their public self image that wants to be shown engagement, ratification, and appreciation from others– the want to be wanted. The FTA is performed utilizing strategies oriented towards the positive face threat to the hearer (Bousfield, 2008: 57). The positive politeness shows that the speaker recognizes the hearer has desire to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and it expresses group reciprocity. This type of strategy is usually seen in the groups of friends or where the people in the social situation know each other fairly well.

Here, the threat to face is relatively low. It usually tries to minimize the distance between them by expressing friendly statement and solid interest in the hearer's needs. And according to Brown and Levinson in Bousfield (2008: 57), there are three strategies which are included in Positive politeness: claiming common ground, conveying that S and H are co-operators, and fulfilling H's want for some X. Further explanations are presented below.

#### c) Negative Politeness

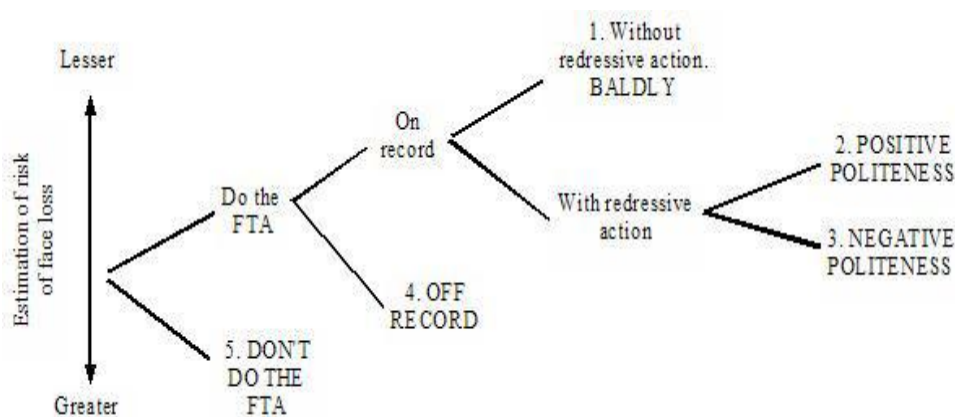
The negative politeness also recognizes the hearer's face. However, it also admits that the speaker is in some way imposing on the hearer. This is the most common and linguistically diverse strategy. Negatively polite constructions contain negative face by demonstrating distance and wariness. Negative face represents the want of every action to get freedom from impingement. Bousfield (2008: 57) states that the FTA in this strategy is performed utilizing strategies oriented towards redressing the negative face threat to the hearer. Here, the threat to face is relatively high. The negative politeness focuses on minimizing the imposition by attempting to soften it. The sub-strategies of negative politeness include being indirect, not presuming/assuming, not coercing H, communicating S's want to not impinge on H, and redressing other wants of H's (Brown and Levinson in Bousfield, 2008: 57-58).

d) Off-record

Off-record (indirect) takes some of the pressure off of the speaker. Its utterances are indirect uses of language which precise meaning has to be interpreted. The FTA performs off record, typically through the deployment of an indirect illocutionary act which has more than one interpretation and, thus, allows for plausible deniability on the part of the speaker if the intended recipient takes offence at the face threat inherent in the utterance (Bousfield, 2008: 58). Thus, if the speaker wants to do an FTA, in contrary, he/she wants to avoid the responsibility in doing it. He/she can do off-record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it. The hearer cannot know with certainty that a hint has been broached; the speaker can credibly claim an alternative interpretation. Here, the threat to face is very high. Inviting conversational implicature and being vague or ambiguous are the sub-strategies of off-record.

The FTA, judged to be too threatening to the intended recipient, is, therefore, in the interests of social harmony, not performed (Bousfield, 2008: 59). Here, the speakers entirely avoid performing the FTA, perfectly avoiding threat to another's face. Speakers choose this strategy when they estimate the threat to another's face is extremely high. For example, there is someone who wants to borrow a lawnmower from his neighbor. If he does not know his neighbor, he might decide to choose the negative pole of rational decision (not to do the FTA at all), which would logically result in never borrowing the lawnmower at all. Of course, if he is desperate, he could secretly 'borrow' the lawnmower without asking and without the addressee knowing, but if this ever becomes known, it would constitute a very serious face-threatening act (Watts, 2003: 93)

Possible strategies for doing FTA or not



## II. Methodology

This research employed descriptive qualitative approach. It is concerned with providing the description of the phenomena which occur naturally without any intervention of an experiment treatment. The data of the research were dialogues among the main characters in which utterances containing politeness strategies were in the movie. In this research, the primary instrument was the researcher herself. The researcher takes a role as the designer, data collector, data analyst, data interpreter, and the reporter of the research findings (Moleong, 2001: 121). In this research, the researcher uses not-taking technique in collecting the data. Then, the data were collected by conducting several steps.

1. The movie was watched carefully and comprehensively in order to find the appropriate information needed for answering the research objectives.
2. While the movie was watched, the script was also read to re-check the accuracy of the script.
3. The dialogues consisting politeness strategies were interpreted and identified.
4. The data were transferred into the data sheets.

## III. Result and Finding

In this research, the researcher applies her own perspective and basic knowledge to judge the politeness strategies employed by the main characters when having conversation with other actors and the way those strategies are realized in 21 jump street movie. This research attempts to describe those strategies and in the findings section, the researcher shows the results of the data analysis.

No	Politeness strategy	The realization	Frequency	Example of Utterance
1	Bald on Record	a. Showing Disagreement	7	A: infiltrate the dealers, find the suppliers B: but if we find the suppliers first, we don't have to worry about the dealers
		b. Giving Suggestion/Advice	10	I think it would be better if you get in
		c. Requesting	8	Can you just get out of my way?
		d. Warning/Threatening	12	If you are not back in 6 minutes, I will send you the principal
		e. Using Imperative Form	17	Hands up! Freeze!
2	Positive Politeness	a. Claiming Common Ground	6	I am pretty skeptical, but if someone fun asked me to go to prom, I would go
		b. promising	4	A: I just want to make sure that you and Eric are going to be careful with whatever it is that you're getting involve in
		c. exaggerating	3	This is crazy. This is like the craziest thing I've ever been a part of
3	Negative Politeness	b. Being Indirect	4	You won't mind if I search you bike now, would you?
		c. Not Presuming/Assuming	7	I might become popular
		d. apologizing	3	I wasn't trying to be rude, sorry
4	Off Record	a. Being Vague/Ambiguous	6	I'm not some, like, 50s letterman who pins a girl.
		b. Inviting Conversational implicature	4	A: are you texting molly? B: what? I don't know.... Molly.... Maybe.... Is that....
		c. Ironic/metaphors	15	Then you come in here looking like a rock-solid 10
		b. Being incomplete	4	Aren't you and eric.....(going together)
	Total		105	

As it is illustrated in the table that the Bald on record is the most applied by the main characters, the occurrences of its sub strategies also have the largest rank. Using imperative form, which is the sub strategy of bald on record, is in the first position with 17 times out of 105 total occurrences. The second place is the sub-strategy of off record, being ironic/ metaphoric occurs 15 times out of the whole occurrences. As the next level, there is the sub strategy of Bald on record, Warning/ Threatening, with 12 occurrences out of 105 total data followed by giving suggestion/advice. The other sub-strategies which are applied in less-than 10 times are showing disagreement and requesting, the sub-strategy of Off record, which have 7 and 8 times of occurrence. All the sub-strategy of positive politeness also occurs less than 10 times, which are claiming common ground occurs 6 times, promising occurs 4 times, and exaggerating occurs 3 times. The similar result goes to all sub strategy of negative politeness which is applied in less-than 10 times, such as being pessimistic occurs 4 times, being indirect occurs 4 times, not presuming/assuming occurs 7 times, and apologizing occurs 3 times. In off record sub strategy, being vague/ambiguous occurs 6 times while inviting conversational implicature and being incomplete shows the same result which appear 4 times out of 105.

#### IV. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the findings and discussion, the results of the research can be concluded that There are four types of politeness strategies employed by the main characters in 21 jump street movie when having conversations with the other characters. They are Bald-on record, Positive politeness, Negative politeness, and Off-record strategy. Among the four strategies, bald on record strategy is the most frequent strategy that occurs 49 times out of 105 total data. It is followed by off record strategy that occurs 29 times out of 109, Negative politeness strategy (18 out of 105), and positive politeness strategy (13 out of 105). The main characters, jenko and schmid prefer to apply bald on record and off record strategy because it is commonly found in the group of people who know each other very well and are very comfortable in their environment. 21 jump street movie is a teenager movie which closely related to the life style of teenager in America like using drugs, owning guns, having party and others. In the conversation, They tend to use dirty words among the characters, therefore using warning/threatening and imperative forms which belong to bald on record strategy are mostly used here. Besides, the actors also frequently used ironic/metaphoric language in the conversation to avoid being sarcastic, because even the persons with high social status like the head of cops and the principal are using dirty words as well.

After being understood about the strategies, the researcher hopes that those strategies will not be applied when having interaction with elderly or honored people, because those strategies are appropriate for teenagers who have close relationship like best friends. However, this study only presents a little part of applying politeness in human's daily life reflected in the movie. Thus, the researcher also recommends the readers to find out some more important values of politeness in the other resources.

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