
Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies by the Characters *Every Waking Breath* Movie

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Received: 27th April 2022 | Revised: 22nd June 2022 | Accepted: 22nd June 2022
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Abstract

Good communication happened when a message is delivered by the speaker is well received by the interlocutor and both the speaker and the interlocutor feel good about what they do together. Thus make politeness and language cannot be separated. Politeness is not only can be seen from the manner, but also from the use of language. Positive and negative politeness strategies are commonly applied by people in their communication process. By understanding these two strategies, people are able to interact better in society. This study investigates how positive politeness and negative politeness strategies are enacted by the characters in the *Every Waking Breath* movie, and which strategies are predominantly applied. The data was taken from the characters' utterances. Documentation and observation method were used and was assisted by note-taking techniques to obtain the data. Mix-method was used to present the analysis. The results showed there are nine types of positive politeness strategies applied by the characters, (i.e., Abigail/ Liz, Mark, and Sophie). The predominant positive politeness strategy used is Strategy 4: [Use in-group identity markers]. On the other hand, we identified five types of negative politeness strategies applied by characters. The conclusion of this research is that 17 (70,83%) of the total 24 utterances evoke the positive politeness strategies while 8 (29,17%) reflect the negative politeness strategies. The predominance of the positive politeness strategies suggests socially close relationships and solidarity between interlocutors in the movie.

Keywords: Politeness Strategies, Positive Politeness Strategies, Negative Politeness Strategies, Movie, Characters.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is used widely in various sectors in human life besides as a power to build relationships in society. The language used in society goes hand in hand with politeness. Good communication happened when a message is delivered by the speaker is well received by the interlocutor and both the speaker and the interlocutor feel good about what they do together. Thus make politeness is not only can be seen from the manner, but also from the use of language. In general, politeness involves considering

others' feelings and avoiding social conflict. Being polite means making other people feel good. Linguistically, being polite means when we are speaking to people appropriately in relation to your relationship (Holmes, 2013, p. 285).

Brown and Levinson stated four main strategies that can be used in human beings' communication such as positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on – record and off - record (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 129). Those strategies will be applied differently based on the situation and the function of communication itself.

There are fifteen types of positive politeness strategies, while there are ten strategies of negative strategies. Positive politeness strategy reflects an intimate social relationship between the communication parties. People use this strategy between friends, or family in informal situations to express closeness and solidarity to each other (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 101). In contrast, the negative politeness strategies represent respect from the speaker to the interlocutor and are commonly used in formal situations. This strategy is often used between acquaintances or when one of the parties has higher social status. The negative politeness strategy also emphasizes avoidance of imposition action on the hearer. By applying negative politeness, the speaker wants his freedom of action not to be precluded by the hearer.

Three problems can be formulated based on the background of study and need to be tackled such as (1) What are the positive politeness strategies applied by the characters in the short movie? (2) What are the negative politeness strategies applied by the characters in the short movie? (3) Which strategy is predominantly applied? Based on problems of the study that have been proposed, there are three objective needs to be reached (1) To identify the use of positive politeness strategies by the characters in movie. (2) To identify the use of negative politeness strategies by the characters movie. (3) To determine the prominent strategy used by the characters.

Pratiknyo (2016) claimed that someone will use of positive politeness when they and the interlocutor are closed. Moreover, someone will use politeness strategies when they have a high level of power rather than the interlocutor in terms of economic or the social status itself. Meanwhile, when there is a gap of distance between the communication parties, the speaker will use the lower power than the hearer. Stated by Dzikriyah (2018) in an emergency situation people might use positive politeness instead of negative politeness in order to express solidarity even though both the speaker and the hearer didn't know each other fairly well.

Negative politeness strategies are employed by the speaker to show respect to the hearer. Kuzhevskaya (2019) stated the use of negative politeness is commonly used in formal situation rather

than positive politeness for example in a business meeting intended the meeting look formal and professional.

This study investigated the application of positive politeness strategy as they are commonly used by people in society. By examining how these two strategies are used in communication, people are able to interact better in society.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This section explained the data source (type and where the data was taken from) and method and technique used, including how the data were collected, analyzed, and presented.

2.1. Data Source

The primary data was taken from the movie entitled *Every Waking Breath* which was directed by Scoot Driver and released in 2016. This movie is considered a short movie since it has (is only 25) minutes long. This movie won award for British Short Film Drama in 2016. The decision for selecting this movie, besides its the nice plot, is because it provides adequate categories of positive and negative politeness strategies in their conversation. The data was taken from the characters' utterances namely Abigail/ Liz, Mark, the Priest, and Sophie and Steve.

2.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

To gather the data, we applied the documentation and observation method, complemented with the note-taking techniques. The first step was watching the movie on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/scHKLpcMlpQ>). Then the characters' dialogue was observed, and the relevant utterances were note down. The next step was classifying the utterance based on their types. Lastly, the frequency of the strategies was measured.

2.3. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

Theory of politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) was utilized as main theoretical framework. This theory was selected because it appropriate to answer the problem of the studies since it provided much information about the types of positive and negative politeness strategies.

2.4. Method and Technique of Presenting Data

A mix-method (qualitative and quantitative) was used to present the analysis. The qualitative method was used to present the result and discussion of the first and second problem through an informal style in order to give a depth explanation. Meanwhile, the quantitative method was used to present the result of frequencies of the strategy. Using a formal style through table to the number of frequencies is able to present neat and structured.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For the reason of space, the discussions cover the selection of the relevant findings. The complete findings are available open access on Figshare: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.19501274> (Aspitasari, Budiarsa, and Rajeg, 2022).

3.1. Positive politeness strategies by the characters

Dialogue (1): 05.54 – 06.31

Sophie: **Hey everyone..** So I haven't drunk now for over three weeks. I was close, last Wednesday, but I managed to fight the urge. **I couldn't have done it without you guys so, thank you all.**

Mark: **(Clapping hand) that's brilliant, Sophie, well done, well done.**

The dialogue is between Sophie, Mark, and other members of the group in a room. **Strategy 4: [Use in-group identity markers]** was applied by Sophie marked by the use of 'guys' to the member of the group. It means that both the speaker and the hearer have a closed relationship. It also indicates that the same group-membership of the speaker and the hearer. By using strategy 4, Sophie expressed her solidarity with the others member to show friendliness. On the other hand, the use of **Strategy 15: [Give gift to H (goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation)]** was applied by Mark to give the gift in form of a compliment to Sophie to make the hearer feel good. This strategy was applied by Mark to make the hearer appreciate Sophie's effort and motivated her to be a better person.

Dialogue (2): 08.50 – 09.39

Mark: So, **we have some new guys with us tonight.** It'd be great if you could introduce yourselves.

Abigail: Hey everyone, I'm Liz. I'm 24, and I'm an alcoholic. It started when I was about 16. Drinking in the bar with friends, silly stuff you know? And now I'm drinking almost every night I just feel so empty inside like I've got no one to talk to..

The dialogue above occurred between Abigail, Mark and the member of an alcoholic group. Both Mark and Abigail applied positive politeness strategies when they are talking. Mark used **Strategy 12: [Include both S and H in the same activity]** represented by the use of 'we' and 'us' in order to show friendliness to Abigail and introduce her to the member of the group. Abigail used **Strategy 3: [Intensify interest to H]** by sharing her story when she introduced herself to the other member of the group.

Dialogue (3): 10.32 – 10.57

Mark: Liz!

Abigail: Oh hi Mark..

Mark: **How are you? Have you are you crying?**

Abigail: I'm fine

Mark: What's wrong? Talks to me..

Abigail: It's nothing honestly

Mark: Look I'm nearly finished for the day. We can go talk if you like

The conversation is between Abigail and Mark that occurred at the park. The speaker and the hearer know each other causes both of them are in the same of membership of the alcoholic group. In this dialogue, Mark applied three different types of positive politeness strategies, namely **strategy 1: [notice, attend, to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods), strategy 13: [give/ ask for reason], and strategy 10: [offer, promise]** He noticed that Abigail not in good condition. By applying strategy 1, Mark shows his care to Abigail. Knowing something wrong happened to Abigail, Mark applied strategy 13 to ask the reason why she crying and strategy 10 of offering. By applying this strategy, Mark shows his sympathy, so he offers help. He assumes that he can help Abigail if she tells him the truth.

Dialogue (4): 11.25 – 11.45

Mark: You don't have to be alone Liz, there's the whole group there to support you, especially me. Why don't you come round for dinner one night?

Abigail: No I wouldn't want to be intruding

Mark: Don't be silly How about Saturday?

Abigail: Are you sure?

Mark: Positive. You should be going I'll send you my address.

In Dialogue (4), the two strategies of positive politeness that Mark applied are **Strategy 15: [Give gift to H (goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation)]** shown through Mark's sympathy to Abigail, and **Strategy 11: [Be optimistic]** marked by Mark's desire to Abigail that he wants that Liz come to his house, cause he thinks by inviting Abigail to come to dinner in his house would help her to reduce her stress.

Dialogue (5): 16.30 – 17.08

Mark: There's no...?

Abigail: Oh no, I made it myself

[COUGHING]

Mark: Are you sure there's no...

[COUGHING]

The conversation occurred in Mark's house. Abigail applied **Strategy 9: [Assert S's knowledge of H's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants in with them]** of positive politeness indicated by Abigail's knowledge of Mark's personal information, that Mark has allergic to peanuts.

3.2. Negative politeness strategies by the characters

Dialogue (6): 02.51 – 03.23

Priest: **How many times have we spoken about this?**

Mark: I know.. it's just I can't stop thinking about it.

Priest: God forgives you for what happened. John 3:16: For God so loved the earth tha...

Mark: I know what the Bible says..

Priest: What the Lord says, Mark, and it's true, you are forgiven.

In this conversation, the dialogue is between the priest and Mark in the Church. The priest used **Strategy 1: [Be conventionally indirect]** because his utterance contained indirect speech. There was hidden meaning in his utterance, which actually the priest want that to convey to Mark. He actually wants that Mark to stop talking about the fault that he did in the past, and only think about the present. By stating his utterance using this strategy, the priest hides his request to Mark, thus making he didn't threaten Mark's face.

Dialogue (7): 06.51 – 07.09

Sophie: Mark, I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate everything that you've done for me. Thank you so much..

Mark: **I've been through some dark times myself. I'm happy I was able to help.**

The conversation is between Sophie and Mark. Sophie says her thank you to Mark for all that he did have changed herself to be a better person. Mark applied negative politeness strategies of **Strategy 5 [Give deference]** to show her respect for Sophie. By being humble Mark tries to minimize the distance to Sophie.

Dialogue (8): 09.58 – 10.16

Mark: So, how's it going?

Steve: Yeah hello Mark, you fancy a bit of cake?

Mark: Are you trying to kill me?

Steve: Oh God yeah, I forgot mate. Sorry, yeah.. I can always take the nuts out for you

Mark: I don't think I'll take the risk; I'll go for the tea.

The conversation is between Mark and Steve at the canteen. Steve used negative politeness strategies in his utterance namely **Strategy 6: [Apologize]** by stating his apology to Mark. Steve knew that Mark has allergic to peanuts. However, he forgot about that, he did apologize in order to reduce the FTA to Mark.

Dialogue (9): 13.24 – 13.49

Mark: I'd prefer not to talk about it.

Abigail: I told you my story.
Mark: I've made some mistakes in the past. Things I'm still struggling to come to terms with
Abigail: You can tell me, maybe I can help.
Mark: Look I think it's best that we don't, okay? (Question hedge by saying okay)

In this dialogue Abigail assumed that Mark will be cooperated to fulfil Abigail's desire by telling his story. However, Mark won't tell her, because it will remind him of his trauma. Negative politeness strategy namely **Strategy 3: [Be Pessimistic]** used by Abigail to ask about Mark's possibilities once again. However, Mark feels threat by Abigail, and he refused to talk with Abigail. In order to minimize the tension of the communication Mark applied negative politeness of **[Strategy 2: Question Hedge]**, this strategy is used to soften the command to Abigail to stop talking about the past.

3.3. The Strategy that Most Used by the Characters

This section presented the frequencies number of the used positive and negative politeness strategies that applied by the characters in the movie. The first figure showed the frequency count of positive politeness strategies. The second figure showed the frequency count of negative politeness strategies. Further, the third figure showed the most strategies used by the characters in the movie.

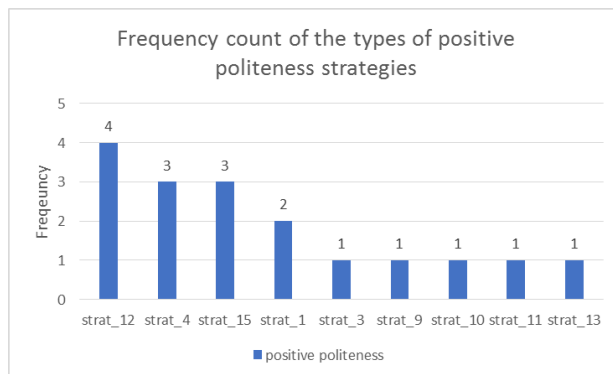


Figure 1. Positive Politeness Strategies

From figure (1) the result showed that from fifteen positive politeness strategies, there are only nine strategies applied by characters in their communication process. The Strategy 12 becomes the predominant strategy applied by the character in order to express friendliness and to minimize the distance between the communication parties. This strategy appeared four times in utterances numbers (3), (6), (9), and (16). The second position which most appeared are Strategy 4: [Use in-group identity markers] and Strategy 15: [Give gift to H (goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation)] which was occurred three times. Furthermore, Strategy 11: [Be optimistic] appeared twice, and the strategy that is rarely used is Strategy 1: [Notice, attend, to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods)], Strategy 3: [Intensify interest to H], Strategy 9: [Assert S's knowledge of H's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants in

with them], Strategy 10: [offer, promise], and Strategy 13: [Give/ ask for reason], which those strategies appeared only one time.

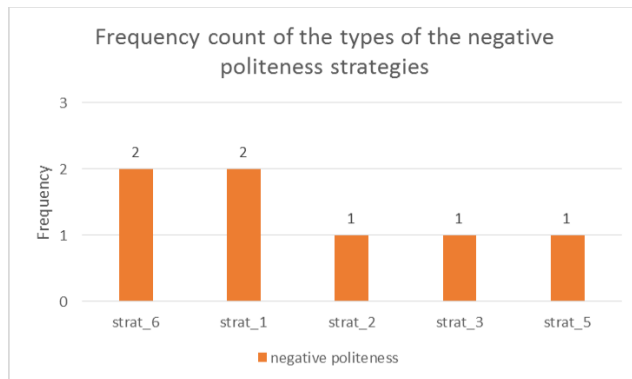


Figure.2 Negative Politeness Strategies

Figure (2) showed the result of negative politeness strategies applied by characters. From the ten strategies, only five negative politeness strategies are applied by characters, such as Strategy 1: [Be conventionally indirect] and Strategy 6: [Apologize]. These strategies are appeared twice. Other strategy namely Strategy 2: [Question – Hedge], Strategy 3: [Be pessimistic], and Strategy 5: [Give deference] appeared only once.

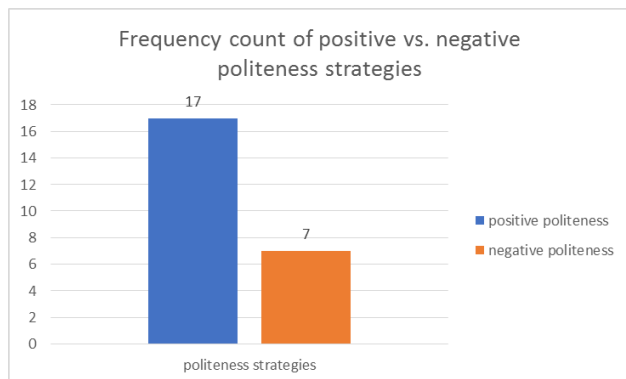


Figure. 3 Frequency Count of Positive VS Negative Politeness Strategies

Figure (3) showed the result between positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. The result are shown that the most strategy employed is positive politeness strategy which occurred 17 times or 70,83%. While negative politeness strategies were applied by the characters 7 times or 29,17%.

4. CONCLUSION

The finding and the discussion showed that there are nine strategies from fifteen positive politeness strategies applied by characters, namely Abigail/ Liz, Mark, and Sophie. The strategy that are used includes Strategy 1: [Notice, attend, to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods)], Strategy 3: [Intensify interest to H], Strategy 4: [Use in-group identity markers], Strategy 9: [Assert S's knowledge of H's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants in with them], Strategy 10: [offer, promise], Strategy 11: [Be optimistic], Strategy 12: [Include both S and H in the same activity], Strategy 13: [Give/ ask for reason], and Strategy 15: [Give gift to H (goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation)]. Those strategies were used by the characters in the movie in order to make the hearer feel comfortable and as the way to express solidarity and friendliness.

There are five kinds of negative politeness strategies that applied by characters, namely Abigail/Liz, Mark, The Priest, and Steve. The strategy that were used including Strategy 1: [Be conventionally indirect], Strategy 2: [Question – Hedge], Strategy 3: [Be pessimistic], Strategy 5: [Give deference], and Strategy 6: [Apologize]. The application of these strategies to showing respects, soften the request act and do apologize to redress the FTA to the hearer.

Positive politeness strategies became the dominant strategy that was applied by the character in communication process. In total, positive politeness strategies is appeared 70,83%. Strategy 12: [Include both S and H in the same activity] become the most dominant strategy that is used by the character in order to express friendliness and to minimize the distance between the communication parties. This strategy appeared four times. The second position which most appeared are Strategy 4: [Use in-group identity markers] and Strategy 15: [Give gift to H (goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation)]. Furthermore, Strategy 11: [Be optimistic] appeared twice as the third positioned. Lastly, the strategy that was rarely used were Strategy 1: [Notice, attend, to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods)], Strategy 3: [Intensify interest to H], Strategy 9: [Assert S's knowledge of H's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants in with them], Strategy 10: [offer, promise], and Strategy 13: [Give/ ask for reason], which those strategies appeared only one time.

Meanwhile, negative politeness strategies only occur 29,17% of total utterances analysed. Strategy 1: [Be conventionally indirect] and Strategy 6: [Apologize] become the most strategies used by the characters appeared twice. While Strategy 2: [Question – Hedge], Strategy 3: [Be pessimistic], and Strategy 5: [Give deference] appeared only once. The predominance of the positive politeness strategies suggests socially close relationship and solidarity between interlocutors in the movie.

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