

**Politeness Strategies Employed in “A Star is Born” Movie**

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**Abstrak**

Politeness strategi adalah alat yang digunakan untuk menjaga percakapan agar berjalan dengan baik dan sopan. Penelitian ini berfokus pada penggunaan Politeness Strategi yang digunakan oleh karakter utama dalam film “A Star is Born” yaitu Ally dan Jackson. Jackson adalah penyanyi rock terkenal yang menderita kecanduan alkohol dan obat-obatan terlarang. A star is born adalah film yang bergenre drama musikal romance. Teori yang digunakan oleh peneliti untuk menyelesaikan penelitian ini adalah teori politeness strategi oleh Brown and Levinson (1987). Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi tipe dari politeness strategi yang digunakan oleh dua karakter utama dalam film dan faktor yang mempengaruhi mereka dalam menggunakan politeness strategy. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif melalui analisis percakapan untuk menjawab tujuan dari penelitian. Data sebanyak 40 ucapan yang dikumpulkan melalui teknik dokumentasi. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan ada empat tipe politeness strategy yang digunakan oleh dua karakter utama dalam film yaitu off record, negative politeness, on record, positive politeness. Selanjutnya, faktor yang mempengaruhi karakter utama dalam menggunakan politeness strategi adalah sociological variables yang terdiri dari social distance, relative power, dan rank of imposition

Kata Kunci : film, politeness, off record, negatif, on record, positif

**Abstract**

Politeness strategy is a tool in keeping a communication run efficiently and smoothly. This research focused on the use of Politeness Strategies used by two main characters of ‘A Star is Born’ movie, Ally and Jackson. Jackson is a famous country rock singer who suffering an alcohol and drug addiction and Ally who works as a waitress in a restaurant and sideline as a singer and songwriter. A Star is Born is a musical romance movie. The theory that used by researcher to completed this research is the theory of politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1987). The purposes of this research were to identify the type of politeness strategy used by the two main characters of the movie and the factors that influencing the choice of politeness strategy. This research used a qualitative research method by employing discourse analysis to answer the purpose of the study. The data were 40 utterances gathered through documentation technique. According to the result of the study, it can be seen that there were 4 types of politeness strategies employed by the two main characters, i.e. off record, negative politeness, on record, and positive politeness. Furthermore, the factors influencing the two main characters to use such types of politeness strategies is sociological variables which consist of social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition.

Keyword : Movie, politeness, off record, negative, on record, positive

**INTRODUCTION**

Politeness strategy is one of the most effective ways to have a good relationship with people in communication. Politeness is the best way to express articulation as the reasonable utilization of good habits or decorum. Politeness can mostly be found in every people’s communication, even more so on particular situations such as, first time meeting, formal meeting, or interacting with people from higher social status.

Politeness is one of the most important things in communication. The politeness strategy is basically the

study of knowing the way people use the language while they are having interaction or communication with people. It is a study about how to use the language and conduct the dialogue in order to run well and go efficiently.

People use politeness as a communication strategy to protect and develop a good relationships with the hearer. Polite person could makes others feel safe and comfortable. Besides, someone can be considered as a polite person depending on how, to whom, and when they applies those polite manners.

Interesting enough, politeness can also be found in literary works. Politeness shown in fictions or literary works can be seen as the portrayal of the characteristic of the character, not just because of the social factor such as what happens in real world. Therefore, the researcher chose to analyze politeness strategies to investigate the language phenomena happened in a movie. The movie which the researcher chose to analyze is "A Star is Born" movie.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as behaving a way that attempts to take into account the feeling of people being addressed. In other words, being polite means that we try to keep our manners or behaviors and our language not to hurt other people's feelings. Moreover, they proposed the concept of politeness strategies which are developed to save hearer's face. Face refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself and maintaining that 'self-esteem' in public or in private situations.

Moreover, according to Brown and Levinson (1978) politeness is occurred when the speaker wanted to protect their image or "face" during the conversation whether it is in private or public setting. Politeness can be defined as an act of a speaker in showing their respect or appreciation towards the hearer. In establishing politeness strategy, Brown and Levinson (1987) categorize politeness strategies widely employed by people in conversation into four type, they are positive politeness, negative politeness, off record, and bald on record.

### **Positive politeness**

Positive politeness elaborates in many specifications. Politeness strategies deal mainly with the idea of maintaining one's face in order to avoid any damage to the face, whether it is the speaker or the hearer. In order to avoid that damage, there is an act which both speaker and hearer can use, face saving act (FSA). Face saving act stresses on the idea of being polite in communicating so that it can reduce the possible threat to one's face. Take giving deference above as an example. In that sentence, someone is being very polite in expressing their respect towards another, thus, reducing any threat to both speaker and hearer's face. In short, using positive politeness will reduce the distance between speaker and hearer and resulting in closeness between the two. Positive politeness consist of notice, attend to hearer, exaggerate intensify interest to the hearer, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose/ rise / assert common ground, joke, conveying that the speaker and the hearer are cooperators, assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concerns for hearer's wants offer, promise, be optimistic, include both speaker and hearer in

the activity, give or ask for reason, assume or assert reciprocity, fulfilling hearer's wants, and give gifts to the hearer.

For example :

1. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer)  
*What a fantastic garden you have!*
2. Notice, attend to hearer  
*what a beautiful vase this is! Where did it come from?*
3. Presupposition manipulations  
*wouldn't you like a drink?*

### **Negative politeness**

Face saving act can commonly be found in negative politeness strategies (Yule, 1996). This means that FSA is actually used by the speaker in order to maintain their positive face by not imposing the hearer. According to Munawaroh (in Wardani, 2014), "respect and deference are often described when persons are aware of another person's face if the social distant seems so clear". The clear differences between negative politeness and positive politeness is the social distance purpose. Positive politeness is used in order to reduce the social distant and showing solidarity, on the other hand, negative politeness is used to maintain the social distant and respect the status difference. This strategy is commonly used by people who have lower social status and expressing their ideas in a very polite manner. Negative politeness consists of be conventionally indirect, question, hedge, be pessimistic, minimize the imposition, give deference, and apologize.

For example :

1. Apologize (beg forgiveness)  
*I'm sorry to bother you ...*
2. Question, Hedge  
*won't you open the door?*

### **Off record**

Another type of politeness strategy commonly used in daily conversation is off record politeness strategy. People are often afraid to ask something, like favor or request, directly to someone. As a result, they do something else in order to convey what they actually want to say. The only drawback in using off record politeness strategy is that the hearer may not be able to catch what the speaker really want, because it is only a hint after all. Yule (1996) said that if an off record statement has succeeded, it is because more has been communicated than was said. Off record strategies consist of give hints, be vague, and be sarcastic, or

joking.

For example :

1. Give hints  
*it is cold in here*
2. Use rethorical questions  
*how many times do I have to tell you?*

### **Bald on record**

On the contrary of the off record, which is being vague on saying something, on record politeness is occurred when people wanted to ask something or give order directly to someone. On record usually comes in the form of imperative. Most of the time, the use of on record has something to do with social status, like a boss to his subordinate, parents to children or even between friends. Although this direct on record would potentially resulting in threat to the hearer, but it can create closeness effect to the hearer. Joan (2002) states that by using on record, hearer will also feel less reluctant in refusing the favor or order, thus, it can show the closeness between the speaker and the hearer. Bald on record strategies consist of great urgency, speaking as if great efficiency is necessary, task-oriented, little or no desire to maintain someone's face, alerting, welcomes, offers, and request.

For example :

1. Great urgency  
*watch out!*
2. Task oriented  
*pass me the hammer*

The factor that measure speaker of using their politeness strategies is sociological variables and consist of Social Distance, Relative Power, and Rank of Imposition (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

### **Social Distance**

One aspect that influenced the choice of politeness strategy was the speaker's social distance from the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated social distance as a symmetric social dimension of similarity or difference between the speaker and the hearer for the purpose of an act. This social dimension was determined by social attributes such as the age, sex, and socio-cultural background, which included social class and ethnic background.

### **Relative Power**

Relative power was the second factors influincing the choice of politeness strategy. Relative power means when the speaker who have higher power speak to the hearer who have lower power, the speaker

will apply low degree of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) relative power was the degree to which the hearer could impose his or her own want, desire or face over the speaker's want.

### **Rank of Imposition**

The last aspect was the rank of Imposition. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the Rank of Imposition was defined as the amount of stuff that interfered with the hearer's face. The Rank of Imposition has something to do with how urgent the speaker's intention will be.

To support this recent study, there are two previous studies used by the researcher to help and analyzed the politeness strategy in this research. The First previous studies was the analysis of politeness strategies written by Kitamura (2000) from the school of European, Asian, and Middle Eastern Languages and Studies, University of Sidney by title "Adapting Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness to the Analysis of Casual Conversation". He analyzed a small segment of casual conversation in Japanese to show how Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness can be adapted and applied in non-goal oriented interaction. The result of this study was according to Brown and levinson's theory, they had some characteristic which satisfy the criteria of politeness so they can be considered as the type of politeness.

The second previous study was written by Putra (2016) from State University of Surabaya by title "The Use of Politeness strategy in Good Company Movie". He analyzed the implied politeness strategies In Good Company movie including the two main characters (Carter Duryea and Dan Foreman) in how they construct politeness strategies and what factors that influences them. He focused on the effectiveness of politeness strategy in a workplace background movie by the main characters. Negative politeness strategy is the most used strategy in this movie.

There are some research gap that could be found from these previous studies and this study. This previous study did not analyze the type and factors of politeness strategies and the writer used the data from a direct conversation of two native speakers from japan. Meanwhile this study used the data from a movie. The difference between the second previous studies and this study is the subject of the data. The genre of the movie is a comedy drama, meanwhile this study is a musical romantic drama which has a different background. Those previous studies help the writer to complete understanding in categorizing the politeness strategies used by the main characters of A Star is Born movie.

“A Star is Born” is telling the story about Jackson Maine as a rock star singer privately battling an alcohol and drug addiction then he meets Ally and soon she becomes Jackson’s savior, being his support system and taking on the roles of lover and partner.

The purposes of this study are to figure out the types of politeness strategies and find out the social factors that influencing the choice of politeness strategies used by the main characters in A Star is Born movie.

## METHODS

This study used a qualitative method. This method was used because the data were in the form of utterances, sentences, and phrases and not in the form of numbers, graphics, or percentage. The subject of this study were the two main characters from the movie, they are Jackson and Ally. Jackson is a famous rock singer who had a dark past because he is an alcoholic and drug addiction. His partner Ally, she came from a simple family but she had a dream to be a singer. Ally works as a waitress and singer-songwriter.

The data were collected through documentation and gathered from the conversations. The data were the utterances produced by Jackson and Ally. There were 39 utterances that were analyzed through 3 steps proposed by data condensation, data display, and conclusion and verification drawing (Miles, et. al., 2014).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The description of the result and discussion will be organized based on the purposes of the study, hence it will start with the identification of politeness strategies types that occurred in the data. There were four types of politeness strategies, i.e. off record, negative politeness, bald on record, and positive politeness. They were ordered based on their occurrence in the data. Furthermore, the second purpose would also be explained in this passage. The data that has been collected is presented in the form of utterances by the main characters in A Star is Born movie. The researcher found 40 utterances or data about the type of politeness strategies employed by the main characters in A Star is Born movie. The collected data has been sorted by type of politeness strategies and factors that influencing the choice of politeness strategies by the main characters in the following table. Moreover, after analyzing the movie, the researcher found the politeness strategies used in the movie are as shown below:

*Table 1.1 Off Record Politeness Strategy*

No.	Utterances
1.	We’re just not meant to be together
2.	I don’t wanna go home
3.	I guess my brother would tell you that he raised me, but I don’t know.
4.	don’t worry I won’t tell anybody. But I’m not very good at keeping secrets
5.	You have my number
6.	what did I say about smoking in this house?
7.	okay everybody lets go. Time for work
8.	the door’s wide open if you wanna go
9.	thank you so much for your help. You are so helpful
10.	well, you gotta keep your mouth clean. Okay?
11.	I thought of a million things to say to you on the plane but I cant
12.	I cant believe this. What am I doing? Okay sure
13.	here we go. Taking out the trash. Wipe your mouth

*Table 1.2 Negative Politeness Strategy*

No.	Utterances
14.	I apologize for disrespecting your property
15.	you know what? Can I just talk to her for one second outside?
16.	I thought that might be you
17.	which one should I do?
18.	can I try to take it off?
19.	oh, no, no. the whole point is I can see your face
20.	let me see what I can .. all right
21.	can I ask you a personal question?
22.	would you make a right here?
23.	can I touch your nose? Let me just touch is for a second
24.	I’m sorry. I’m sorry I’m late
25.	Hey, sorry. Were you waiting long?

**Table 1.3 Bald on Record Politeness Strategy**

No.	Utterances
26.	Get the fuck out!
27.	it's not really all right, though
28.	hey bryan I'm out, find somebody else
29.	how did you get in here?
30.	you jealous fuck
31.	What's wrong with my hair? I don't wanna be fucking blond
32.	you made me so upset
33.	you know what? If you can't make it happen then fucking cancel the tour

Based on the analysis, the writer identified that all of the main characters used the four politeness strategies in their utterances as stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) theory. Off Record, Negative Politeness, Bald on Record, and Positive Politeness were applied by all of the four main characters.

### Off Record Strategies

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) off-record employs indirect language and removes the speaker from the possibility of being imposed. In this point, the hearer must make an inference to figure out what is meant. Furthermore, it implies that the speakers might use the method to escape their responsibilities of performing FTAs. The results and discussion of off record politeness strategies were listed as follows.

#### Dialogue 1

Roger : ....

Ally : Roger. You are a wonderful man,yes. And you are a great lawyer. ***We're just not meant to be together.***

Roger : ...

The movie begins with a concert played by a band introduced by Jackson. After the scene of Jackson performing at a concert, the scene immediately switches to a bathroom. This is where Ally first appears in a scene by calling someone named Roger, Ally's boyfriend. Furthermore, Ally spoke to Roger over the phone and told him if she wanted to break up or end her relationship with him. Ally did not say it immediately and clearly, instead she said "***We're just not meant to be together***". From the utterance, Ally applied off record politeness strategy, by using *Give hints* strategy. The dialogue above showed that Ally applied Off record strategy by using *give hints* strategy. In this case, Ally talked to her boyfriend using *give hints*. The *give hints* strategy is one that, "If the

**Table 1.4 Positive Politeness Strategy**

No.	Utterances
34.	your nose is too big? Your nose is beautiful
35.	so why are you in here,hon?
36.	it's a good thing we met
37.	why don't we just go there? Its nearby
38.	that was fucking beautiful
39.	I think I got an idea that might help out, all right?
40.	where the fuck are we?

speaker says something that is not explicitly relevant, he invites Hearer to search for an interpretation of the possible relevance." He said, "*Not meant to be together,*" which has the same meaning as her urge to break up or end the relationship with Roger. Ally didn't say that she wanted to break her relationship with Roger outright; instead, she intentionally chose to use another sentence that forced Roger to interpret by himself what Ally meant by saying that. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that when a speaker said anything that isn't directly relevant, he encouraged the listener to figure out the possible meaning.

The factors influencing the choice of politeness strategy in this dialogue was Rank of Imposition. Rank of imposition has to do with how important the speaker's goal is. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that the rank of imposition was the degree of a matter that was considered as the interference to the face of the hearer. In this dialogue between Ally and Roger, Ally was represents how rank of imposition affect the choice of politeness strategy.

#### Dialogue 2

Jackson : ***I don't wanna go home***

Phil : wish I could find you a spot.  
Sorry jack, I don't know this area.

The black car arrived at the concert, the door opened and it was Jackson. That was his concert in California. After a show, Jackson wants to visit a bar and told his driver if he does not want to go home. In the scene, Jackson was still under the influence of alcohol. His driver, Phil, knows what Jackson wants but Phil does not know about the area in the city. Phil tried to find the bar that was still open. The dialogue above showed that when Jackson had a conversation

with Phil, Jackson applied Off record politeness strategy by using *give association clues*. From the utterance, Phil knew what Jackson meant. Jackson said “*I don’t wanna go home*” then Phil tried to find out the bar that could be visited. Jackson and Phil have a close relationship so that makes Phil understand what Jackson means. It was in line with Brown and Levinson (1987) explanation that by using *give association clues* A related kind of implicature triggered by relevance violations is provided by mentioning something associated with the act required of Hearer, either by precedent in Speaker-hearer’s experience or by mutual knowledge irrespective of their interactional experience.

The factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies in this dialogue was the social distance. Social distance was found in the conversation between Jackson and Phil as seen in dialogue. In the movie Jackson and Phil have a different social distance, Phil as Jackson’s driver and Jackson as his boss. It represented how social distance would affect the choice of politeness strategy.

#### **Negative Politeness Strategies**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) negative politeness is “the heart of respect behavior” and it is “more specific and focused”. The results and discussion of negative politeness strategies were explained as follows.

#### **Dialogue 3**

Jackson : *I apologize for disrespecting your property*  
George : not necessary  
Jackson : or whatever I did

After Ally’s singing scene appears on television the scene switches on the yard. Jackson fell asleep on the yard and he was woken up by George and being carried. Jackson slept in his friend’s house because last night he was drunk till make him unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he apologized to George and his wife for damaging their yard by saying “*I apologize for disrespecting your property*”.

Jackson used a negative politeness strategy, apologizing, as shown in the conversation above. He begged George’s pardon for destroying his property. He apologized in a regular tone to him. As a result of the social difference between them, Jackson used negative politeness in delivering his apology for being rude. The speaker might show his unwillingness to disturb the hearer’s negative face and repair that impingement by apologizing for doing FTA. According

to Brown and Levinson (1987), apologizing shows the speaker’s unwillingness to threaten the hearer’s face with impingement.

#### **Dialogue 4**

Rez : we have to get downstairs everyone’s waiting for you, come.  
Aly : okay  
Jackson : *you know what? Can I just talk to her for one second outside?*

The conversation above happened at the apartment after Ally come out from the bathroom everyone says congratulations to Ally for something she reach. Her manager, Rez told her to go downstairs as soon as possible because everyone is waiting for her. Then Jackson asked Rez’s permission first before he talked to Ally by saying “*can I just talk to her for one second outside?*”. From the utterance of Jackson, he used a Negative politeness strategy by being conventionally indirect to Rez. Jackson applied this strategy to asked Rez’s agreement in order to speak with Ally. Jackson said “*can I just talk to her for one second outside?*” instead of saying “I have to talk to her”.

The factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies in the dialogue 3 and 4 was the social distance. Social distance was found in the dialogue above, Jackson utterances in the dialogue represents how social distance would affect the choice of politeness strategy. Social distance is one of the factor that is commonly used by the speakers to signify their strategy in communication. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) Social Distance was a symmetric social dimension of similarity or difference between speaker and listener for the purpose of an act.

#### **Bald On Record Strategies**

Basically Bald on-record strategies are used to address the other person or the hearer directly in order to clarify the speaker’s requirements. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that bald on record strategy is a direct way of saying things, without any minimization to the imposition, in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way. The findings and discussion of bald on record politeness strategies were listed as follows.

#### **Dialogue 5**

Jackson : You’re just fucking ugly, that’s all  
Ally : I’m what?  
Jackson : you’re just fucking ugly  
Ally : *Get the fuck out!*

The scene begins when Ally was soaking in the bathroom. Shortly before the scene in the bathroom there was a bit of trouble going on between Ally and Jackson. Ally saw Jackson carrying a glass filled with alcohol and it made Ally angry because Jackson couldn't stop the influence of alcohol. There was an argument in the bathroom involving Ally and Jackson. They both insulted each other until Jackson said "you're just fucking ugly" which made Ally very angry. Ally was very upset with Jackson's words which said that she was ugly. After that, Ally immediately told Jackson to get out of the bathroom by saying "get the fuck out!". Based on Brown and Levinson's theory, Ally was applying the On record Politeness strategy. In dialogue 5, Ally said "get the fuck out!" to Jackson. The conversation above showed that Ally used On record politeness strategy to maximize efficiency in an urgent condition. In such a condition, Ally may choose this strategy in order to make her statement brief and efficient. Jackson as the hearer must understand what Ally says, that Ally asked him to get out of the bathroom, because the utterance from Ally is very clear and easy to understand.

The factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies in this dialogue was the Relative power. Relative power was found in the utterance between Ally and Jackson as seen in dialogue, when Ally said "get the fuck out!" to Jackson. Ally used the Bald on Record strategy by saying it. This type of strategy was a direct threat toward the listener face. This dialogue shows that Ally has more power than Jackson and it represented how relative power would affect the choice of politeness strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) relative power was the degree to which the hearer could impose their want over the speaker's want. In addition, if the hearer had more power than the speaker, the speaker would use the strategy which was more polite. Furthermore, if the hearer had less power, the speaker would use less polite strategy.

### **Positive Politeness Strategies**

Positive politeness strategy is basically seen in people who know each other fairly well or close friends. Furthermore, the purpose of positive politeness strategies is to reduce the distance between the speaker and other people by expressing and showing closeness and great interest in reducing FTA to the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) positive politeness strategy attempts to attend to the hearer's interest, wants, and goods. The results and discussion

of positive politeness strategies were explained as follows.

### **Dialogue 6**

Jackson : why wouldn't you feel comfortable?  
Ally : cause almost every single person that I've come in contact with in the music industry has told me that my nose is too big and that I won't make it  
Jackson : Your nose is too big?  
Ally : yeah  
Jackson : ***your nose is beautiful***

The conversation above was in the bar while Ally told him (Jackson) the reason why she can't be a singer and she was always rejected by the music industry. Jackson was shocked when he knew the reason. Although Ally had a beautiful voice, the music industry and every single person there refused to do recording because her nose is too big for them. Ally was sad and frustrated at that moment because she was rejected because of her physique. It could be seen from her face while she told him (Jackson). But Jackson told her if her nose is beautiful by saying "*your nose is beautiful*".

From the conversation above Ally used a positive politeness strategy by trying to satisfy Ally's positive face by saying "*your nose is beautiful*" to Ally. Jackson tried to make Ally happy and proud of herself. Jackson gave the purpose of keeping hearer positive faces to Ally by giving her a compliment. However, Jackson applied a positive politeness strategy, exaggerating interest, approval and sympathy with Ally by saying "your nose is beautiful". Moreover, he wanted to satisfy Ally's positive faces.

The factor influencing the choice of politeness strategy in this dialogue was Social distance.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **CONCLUSION**

To collect the data the writer used the theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) he mentioned there are four types of politeness strategy. The results shows that the types of politeness strategies used by the main characters in A Star is Born movie were on record politeness strategy, off-record politeness strategy, positive politeness strategy, and negative politeness strategy. In this movie the type of off record politeness strategy was the most frequent because this strategy is the most polite strategy than other type of politeness strategy and this strategy uses indirect sentences to express something to the hearer. Positive politeness

was the type of strategy that rarely appears in the movie. Furthermore, the factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies were social distance, Relative Power, Rank of Imposition.

#### **SUGGESTION**

This study is about Politeness strategies employed by the main characters in A Star is Born movie. By studying politeness, the readers can gain the sense of the language which properly applied. Therefore, the writer encourages the readers to be more aware and understand the language use in certain social context. The other researchers could use the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson as it has been explained. Perhaps this study could be a references for the future researchers who are interested in conducting study in the similar subject.

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