

## **DISCOVERING POLITENESS STRATEGY IN VLADIMIR PUTIN'S SPEECH ON THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINE WAR 2022**

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### **Abstrak**

Penerapan strategi kesopanan dapat ditemukan dalam interaksi sosial, seperti dalam pidato politik. Pada 24 Februari 2022, Vladimir Putin menyampaikan pidato yang membenarkan “operasi militer khusus” di Ukraina. Komunikasi Putin sering kali tidak mematuhi atau sengaja menyimpang dari norma-norma kesopanan yang biasa. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kesantunan dalam pidato Vladimir Putin tentang perang Rusia-Ukraina 2022. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan menerapkan teori kesantunan dari Brown dan Levinson (1987) untuk analisis. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Vladimir Putin menggunakan strategi kesantunan *bald-on-record*, positif, negatif, dan *off-record*, yang dibagi menjadi beberapa variasi strategi spesifik. *Bald-on-record* menjadi strategi yang paling sering digunakan, diikuti oleh kesantunan positif, negatif, dan *off-record*. Strategi *bald-on-record* mendominasi pidato Putin karena dia ingin meningkatkan efisiensinya dalam berkomunikasi daripada bertele-tele dan meminimalkan tindakan yang mengancam wajah (*Face-Threatening Act*). Dia juga memiliki kekuasaan yang jauh lebih tinggi daripada audiensnya, yang memungkinkannya memberikan perintah, komando, keputusan, dan bahkan ancaman kepada audiens atau lawan politiknya.

**Kata Kunci:** strategi kesantunan, Vladimir Putin, pidato politik, perang Rusia-Ukraina.

### **Abstract**

The implementation of politeness strategy can be found in social interactions, such as in political speech. On February 24, 2022, Vladimir Putin delivered a speech that justified a “special military operation” in Ukraine. Putin’s communication often fails to adhere to or intentionally deviates from typical norms of politeness. The study aims to analyze politeness strategies in Vladimir Putin’s speech on the Russian-Ukraine conflict in 2022. It employed a qualitative approach and applies politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) for analysis. The results revealed that Vladimir Putin employed *bald-on-record*, positive, negative, and *off-record* politeness strategies, which are divided into several variations of specific strategies. *Bald-on-record* is the most frequently used, followed by positive and negative, with *off-record* politeness being the least frequently used strategy. The *bald-on-record* strategy dominated Putin’s speech because he wanted to increase his efficiency in communicating rather than being long-winded and minimizing face-threatening acts (FTAs). He also had much higher power than his audience, which allowed him to give orders, commands, decisions, and even threats to his audience or political opponents.

**Keywords:** politeness strategy, Vladimir Putin, political speech, Russian-Ukraine war.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a system for communicating to express or convey a meaning, idea, feeling, or thought. Language cannot be separated from human life because it is used as a tool to interact and socialize with other people. Through communication, people can give and receive messages so they can achieve their desired outcomes. To make this happen, people need to use good and polite language.

Essentially, everyone have desire to be treated with politeness. Politeness is useful for helping people to build

positive relationships, foster understanding, and promote cooperation. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness is a behavior that involves how people manage face-threatening acts in communication and maintain politeness in social interactions. According to Leech (2014), politeness is a social behavior that involves showing respect, consideration, and good manners toward others. Politeness often involves using courteous language, showing empathy, and adhering to accepted social conventions. Thus, there is a strategy that can help

people maintain politeness in communicating, namely “politeness strategy”.

The implementation of politeness strategy can be found in social interactions. One example is political discourse. Political discourse is intriguing since it is fundamental to society and organizations. Political discourse is “always relevant in the case of a democratic regime where freedom of expression is guaranteed” (Wennerstrom, 2001), but it proves to be much more difficult in the case of speeches by politicians from autocratic or totalitarian regimes (Bogdan, 2022). As a result, different politeness strategies may have been embedded in the political discourse to bolster the ideas and policies while presenting an excellent picture to the general public.

On February 24, 2022, Vladimir Putin delivered a speech in a televised address that justified a “special military operation” in Ukraine by citing grievances. Some of the grievances he conveyed were the longstanding conflict about expanding NATO’s territory and the form of post-Cold War security in Europe. The speech includes the prevalent ideas to control, justify, and legitimate policies to persuade the target audience. Since Putin is the leader of an autocratic regime, he may use different politeness strategies than leaders of democratic countries. Putin is known for his speeches, which often bring up the past and history, showing a desire to return to a time when society was more prosperous. Putin’s communication often fails to adhere to or intentionally deviates from typical norms of politeness. His speeches are frequently controversial due to his direct and confrontational style, which, while demonstrating strength and assertiveness, can also seem aggressive, intimidating, and disrespectful. Additionally, he often lacks empathy and understanding, especially towards opponents, making him appear unresponsive to the general public. Because there are some deviations from Putin’s general politeness, analyzing his different types of politeness strategies is important. It can shed light on how he maintains control and influence in Russia. It shows how he communicated with Russian society and his political opponents. Therefore, this research will analyze the types of politeness strategies found in Vladimir Putin’s English transcript speech on the Russian-Ukraine war in 2022.

## **POLITENESS**

Politeness is a linguistic element in communicating with other people. It becomes the basis of social order and a prerequisite for human cooperation. Politeness also determines the speaker’s attitude toward the audience. Therefore, a speaker must pay attention to the listener’s FTA when discussing an issue or making a request.

Brown and Levinson (1987) defined politeness as a behavior about how people manage FTA in communication and maintain politeness in social interactions. Politeness is attributed to the speaker, rather than to the utterance, whereas the judgment of politeness is entirely in the hands of the addressee (Fraser, 1990). In its application, politeness strategies are essential for maintaining politeness in communication. The concept of “politeness strategies” is integral to those theory. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are the specific communication techniques or behaviors that individuals employ to mitigate face-threatening acts, which could otherwise lead to social discomfort or conflict. Politeness strategies are the ways people employ language to mitigate threats and maintain politeness in communication.

## **TYPES OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES**

### **1. Bald-on Record**

Bald on record involves direct and unambiguous communication without much concern for mitigating the potential impact on the hearer’s positive or negative face. In other words, it is a straightforward and assertive strategy where the speaker expresses their needs, desires, or intentions clearly and explicitly. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the prime reason for the general usage of bald-on-record strategy is that speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he/she wants to satisfy hearer’s face, even to any degree. Someone does a bald-on record strategy when he/she choose to give more priority on efficiency over face saving actions and he/she will say the reaction clearly and say nothing else (Gomez and Manuel, 2022). They stated that “bald-on record is also applied when the action is adhered to someone who is famous or commonly known by the speaker” (Gomez and Manuel, 2022). Additionally, the most direct approach is often employed when there is a significant power difference between the interactants (Gomez and Manuel, 2022).

#### **a. Cases of non-minimization of the face threat**

In communications that require maximum efficiency and are urgent, face redress is needed (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This strategy works if speaker and hearer do not concern with face redress (Lestari, 2023). This strategy is used in desperate, urgent, and in emergencies so that efficiency is very more essential than saving other’s faces (Gomez and Manuel, 2022). Brown and Levinson (1987) defined several subcategories of using bald-on record politeness:

Strategy 1. Maximum efficiency

Strategy 2. Metaphorical urgency for emphasis

Strategy 3. Metaphorical urgency for high valuation of hearer’s friendship

Strategy 4. Case of channel noise

Strategy 5. Task oriented way of instruction

Strategy 6. Power different between speaker and hearer  
(speaker is higher)

Strategy 7. Sympathetic advice or warnings

Strategy 8. Permission from hearer's request.

**b. Cases of FTA-oriented bald-on-record usage**

In this case, three things are expected: First, welcoming (or post-greeting), in which the speaker urges the hearer to give a negative face; second, farewells, where the speaker insists that the hearer might transgress his positive face by taking his leave; third, offers, where the speaker urges the hearer to give a negative face to the speaker (Brown and Levinson, 1987). With bald-on record strategy, the speaker can benefit from the following: the addressee will sense the speaker's trust; the speaker can gain recognition for being truthful; the hearer will recognize the speaker as not manipulative; and the addressee will be able to understand and comprehend the speaker's intentions with ease, preventing misinformation(Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 9. Welcoming and farewells

Strategy 10. Offers

**2. Positive**

Positive politeness is a communication strategy that fosters goodwill and creates a positive social atmosphere in interactions. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined positive politeness as a strategy to mitigate the potential threat to an individual's positive face. It involves seeking common ground, emphasizing shared interests, and showing appreciation to create a sense of mutual respect in the conversation. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined several communicative strategies of using positive politeness:

**a. Claim common ground**

Strategy 1. Notice, attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods)

Strategy 2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer)

Strategy 3. Intensify interest to hearer ('by making 'a good story')

Strategy 4. Use in-group identify markers

Strategy 5. Seek agreement

Strategy 6. Avoid disagreement

Strategy 7. Presuppose/raise/assert common ground

Strategy 8. Joke

**b. Convey that speaker and hearer are cooperators**

Strategy 9. Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants.

Strategy 10. Offer, promise

Strategy 11. Be optimistic

Strategy 12. Include both speaker and hearer in the activity

Strategy 13. Give (or ask for) reasons

Strategy 14. Assume or assert reciprocity

**c. Fulfill hearer's want for some X**

Strategy 15. Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

**3. Negative**

Negative politeness is a communication strategy that involves mitigating potential threats to the hearer's negative face, which is their desire for freedom of action and avoidance of imposition (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This politeness strategy is about showing respect for the hearer's autonomy and minimizing any imposition or inconvenience. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness is likely to be used whenever a speaker wants to put a social brake on to the course of his interaction. Some communication strategies in negative politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) are:

**a. Be direct**

Strategy 1. Be conventionally indirect

**b. Don't presume/assume**

Strategy 2. Question, hedge

**c. Don't coerce hearer**

Strategy 3. Be pessimistic

Strategy 4. Minimize the imposition

Strategy 5. Give deference

**d. Communicate speaker's want to not impinge on hearer**

Strategy 6. Apologize

Strategy 7. Impersonalize speaker and hearer

Strategy 8. State the FTA as a general rule

Strategy 9. Nominalize

**e. Redress other wants of hearer's**

Strategy 10. Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting hearer

**4. Off-Record**

Off-record politeness, also known as indirect communication or hinting, is a strategy in which a speaker conveys a request, suggestion, or information indirectly, without explicitly stating it (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This approach allows the speaker to maintain a degree of politeness by avoiding direct imposition on the hearer's face. Off-record strategies are often more subtle and rely on the hearer's ability to infer the intended meaning without the speaker making a direct request or statement (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Some common strategies and examples of off-record politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) are:

**a. Invite conversational implicatures**

Strategy 1. Give hints

Strategy 2. Give association clues

Strategy 3. Presuppose	
Strategy 4. Understate	
Strategy 5. Overstate	
Strategy 6. Use tautologies	
Strategy 7. Use contradictions	
Strategy 8. Be ironic	
Strategy 9. Use metaphors	
Strategy 10. Use rhetorical questions	
<b>b. Be vague or ambiguous: Violate the Manner Maxim</b>	
Strategy 11. Be ambiguous	
Strategy 12. Be vague	
Strategy 13. Over-generalize	
Strategy 14. Displace hearer	
Strategy 15. Be incomplete, use ellipsis	

## 2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach, discussing the analysis of the English transcript of a speech on the Russian-Ukraine war in 2022 delivered by Vladimir Putin to find a profound answer based on the research aim. The object of this study was the speech of Vladimir Putin in the form of an English transcript entitled “Address by the President of the Russian Federation.” This transcript speech was chosen because Putin’s communication often fails to adhere to or intentionally deviates from typical norms of politeness. His speeches are frequently controversial due to his direct and confrontational style, which, while demonstrating strength and assertiveness, can also seem aggressive, intimidating, and disrespectful. Additionally, he often lacks empathy and understanding, especially towards opponents, making him appear unresponsive to the general public. In addition, since Putin is the leader of an autocratic regime, he may use different politeness strategies than leaders of democratic countries. The data of this study were words, clauses, phrases, and sentences taken from the English transcript speech of Vladimir Putin on February 24, 2022 which contained politeness strategies. This study used documentation as a data collection technique since the data was collected by analyzing Vladimir Putin’s speech in Ukraine.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Vladimir Putin’s speech, various types of politeness strategies are found with several variations of specific strategies. Several interrelated factors also influence the use of politeness strategies.

### a. Bald on Record Politeness

Vladimir Putin often employed the bald on record politeness strategy in his speech where he aims to assert authority, control, and decisiveness. Putin used this strategy because he was in an urgent and emergency

situation, namely the war, so that efficiency in delivering the message was more essential than saving other’s faces. Several categories of bald-on record strategies used by Vladimir Putin is displayed in the table below:

*Table 1 Bald-on record politeness strategy in Vladimir Putin’s speech*

No	Bald-on Record Politeness	Frequency
1	Maximum efficiency	9
2	Warning	7
3	Power difference	6
4	Metaphorical urgency for emphasis	4
5	Metaphorical urgency for high valuation of hearer’s friendship	2
	Total	28

### Strategy 1: Maximum efficiency

*“Let me remind you that in 2000–2005 we used our military to push back against terrorists in the Caucasus and stood up for the integrity of our state.”* (Datum-1)

In this sentence, Putin made a direct statement without employing any overtly polite language or hedging. The phrase *“Let me remind you”* at the beginning of the sentence is a polite phrase and serves to soften the introduction of the remark, while the rest of the sentence is direct and assertive. By using pronoun *“we,”* Putin connected himself with the actions of the Russian military, emphasizing a sense of unity and solidarity with the country. This utterance maximized efficiency in communication since Putin mentioned a specific historical period (2000–2005) and specific actions (using the military against terrorists) which indicates that Putin presents facts clearly that cannot be denied by his audience.

### Strategy 2: Warning

*“Those who refuse to comply are subjected to strong-arm tactics.”* (Datum-2)

The sentence indicates a warning of the consequences of non-compliance for those who refuse to comply with the new agreement. By using the phrase *“subjected to strong-arm tactics,”* Putin conveyed a sense of authority and control. It indicates that there will be consequences for those who do not comply, emphasizing the seriousness of the warning. By stating the consequences of non-compliance directly, Putin warned others of the negative consequences they could face.

### Strategy 3: Power difference

*“In these circumstances, we have to take bold and immediate action.”* (Datum-3)

By using the pronoun *“we”* and the phrase *“have to,”* Putin asserted authority and implied that a decision had been made. This suggests a hierarchical relationship

where the speaker has the power to command action to others. The use of “*bold and immediate action*” conveys decisiveness and urgency. This reinforces Putin’s power and implies that there is no room for negotiation or delay. The use of pronoun “*we*” suggested a collective responsibility, implying that Putin and the audience are part of the same group facing the same situation. Putin was guiding or directing the audience, thus exercising a degree of authority.

#### **Strategy 4: Metaphorical urgency for emphasis**

“*We remember this and will never forget.*” (Datum-4)

The sentence above employs a bald-on-record politeness strategy, which is characterized by directness and lack of hedging or mitigation. In this case, Putin was expressing a strong and unwavering commitment to remembering the history where the West (The United States) betrayed and supported separatist actions in Russia, resulting in many victims, causing many losses and obstacles. The utterance used repetition to create a sense of urgency. The phrases “*remember this*” and “*never forget*” both convey the importance of the memory. Repetition serves to emphasize the critical nature of the memory referred to, making it clear that it is not only important but also something that demands constant awareness. The use of the phrase “*will never forget*” adds emotional weight to the statement to emphasize Russians’ attention to always remembering history.

#### **Strategy 5: Metaphorical urgency for high valuation of hearer’s friendship**

“*The people’s republics of Donbass have asked Russia for help.*” (Datum-5)

By openly stating that the “*people’s republics of Donbass*” have requested assistance from Russia, it asserts the authority and legitimacy of these entities to make such a request. Not only that, the use of the word “*asked*” implies an expectation or assumption that Russia will respond positively to the request for help, encoding that Russia is the one who can send help to the people of Donbass. The act of asking for help itself implied urgency. When the Donbass people’s republics asked for help, this indicated an urgent need that they could not address alone. This urgency highlighted trust and dependence on Russia, and valued the relationship highly enough for them to turn to Russia in critical situations.

#### **b. Positive Politeness**

President Vladimir Putin employed a positive politeness strategy several times in his speech. Putin implemented this strategy to bolster the audience’s positive image so that his wants or actions were considered correct and approved by his audience. In his speech, Putin used several specific positive strategies as the following table:

*Table 2 Positive politeness strategy in Vladimir Putin’s speech*

No	Positive Politeness	Frequency
1	Be optimistic	5
2	Intensify interest to hearer	5
	Assert speaker’s knowledge and	3
3	pay attention to the hearer’s	
	wants	
4	Include both speaker and hearer	1
	in the activity	
5	Use in-group identity marker	1
6	Assert common ground	1
	Total	16

#### **Strategy 1: Be optimistic**

“*At the end of the day, the future of Russia is in the hands of its multi-ethnic people, as has always been the case in our history.*” (Datum-6)

Vladimir Putin was optimistic that the actions he took to invade Ukrainian territory would benefit Russian society. He believed that Russia’s future lay in the hands of its society itself, as had always been the case in previous history. For this reason, Putin assumed that his audience would cooperate and be committed to him because he thought it would be mutually benefit for the common good.

#### **Strategy 2: Intensify interest to hearer**

“*It is a fact that over the past 30 years we have been patiently trying to come to an agreement with the leading NATO countries regarding the principles of equal and indivisible security in Europe. In response to our proposals, we invariably faced either cynical deception and lies or attempts at pressure and blackmail, while the North Atlantic alliance continued to expand despite our protests and concerns. Its military machine is moving and, as I said, is approaching our very border.*” (Datum-7)

Putin intensified interest in the citizens of Russia by creating a story involving the past where Russia patiently, for three decades, tried to reach an agreement with NATO countries regarding security principles. However, Putin said that Russia was always being deceived, lied to, pressured, and blackmailed while its opponents continued to grow. By creating a good story, Putin conveyed his wants to Russian citizens by stating that he had contributed to maintaining his country’s security.

#### **Strategy 3: Assert speaker’s knowledge and paying attention to the hearer’s wants**

“*It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force. At the same time, we have been hearing an increasing number of statements coming from the West that there is no need any more to abide by the documents setting forth*

*the outcomes of World War II, as signed by the totalitarian Soviet regime. How can we respond to that?"* (Datum-8)

Putin emphasized his understanding of and responsiveness to the desires of the Russian people by stating that Russia had no intentions or plans to colonize Ukrainian territory, nor did it intend to resort to military violence. However, he argued that these actions became necessary due to alleged violations by Western countries of agreements stemming from World War II. Putin made these statements recognizing that Russian civilians are unwilling to war and violence.

#### **Strategy 4: Include both speaker and hearer in the activity**

*"I reiterate: we are acting to defend ourselves from the threats created for us and from a worse peril than what is happening now. I am asking you, however hard this may be, to understand this and to work together with us so as to turn this tragic page as soon as possible and to move forward together, without allowing anyone to interfere in our affairs and our relations but developing them independently, so as to create favorable conditions for overcoming all these problems and to strengthen us from within as a single whole, despite the existence of state borders. I believe in this, in our common future."* (Datum-9)

In the utterance above, Putin asked the Ukrainian people to cooperate with Russia so that the war can be ended quickly and reject any party that interferes in their affairs. With the cooperation of both parties, Putin hopes for a better future for Russia and Ukraine.

#### **Strategy 5: Use in-group identify marker**

*"Citizens of Russia, friends."* (Datum-10)

President Vladimir Putin began his speech with his characteristic speaking style, combining formal greetings with Russians and using an in-group identity marker, 'friend,' as an address form to sign his close relationship with his people. Using the address form, Putin implicitly claims that he and Russian citizens are listeners in the same group or community.

#### **Strategy 6: Assert common ground**

*"Your fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers did not fight the Nazi occupiers and did not defend our common Motherland to allow today's neo-Nazis to seize power in Ukraine. You swore the oath of allegiance to the Ukrainian people and not to the junta, the people's adversary which is plundering Ukraine and humiliating the Ukrainian people."* (Datum-11)

Putin retells the history of what happened to Ukraine in the past. He emphasized common ground that previously Russia and Ukraine had an interrelated history. Phrases like "our common Motherland" and "the Ukrainian people" include the audience in a larger group with

shared goals and values. This strategy aims to build solidarity and show that he and the audiences are on the same side.

Overall, Putin used pronouns like "we," "our," and "us" to create a sense of unity and shared purpose. This helped foster a collective identity and reduce social distance between the speaker and the audience. He also recognized and appreciated the efforts, sacrifices, or needs of the audience to show respect and consideration. Additionally, he referenced cultural, historical, or national values that resonate with the audience and used hopeful and positive language to inspire and motivate them.

#### **c. Negative Politeness**

Putin emphasized negative politeness strategies rather than positive politeness. This strategy was implemented to erase any threats to the hearers' negative face, allowing Putin to speak and act freely while avoiding imposition and obscurity. Putin employed negative politeness to place social distance with his audience. Some of his specific communication strategies are as following table:

*Table 3 Negative politeness strategy in Vladimir Putin's speech*

No	Negative Politeness	Frequency
1	Hedge on illocutionary force	3
2	Be unconventionally indirect	2
3	Impersonalize speaker and hearer	1
4	State the face-threatening act as a general rule	1
5	Give deference	1
	Total	8

#### **Strategy 1: Hedge on illocutionary force.**

*"Incidentally, US politicians, political scientists and journalists write and say that a veritable "empire of lies" has been created inside the United States in recent years. It is hard to disagree with this – it is really so."* (Datum-12)

Putin supported the statements of US politicians, political scientists, and journalists who assert that the United States is an "empire of lies". He strongly agreed with the statement, emphasizing his support for hedging "really." The phrase "It is hard to disagree" functioned as a hedge because it softened the directness of the statement. Instead of directly stating agreement, Putin used this phrase to indicate that while he agreed, he was not forcefully imposing his viewpoint. Using this hedge helped Putin to mitigate potential face-threatening act (FTA) or disagreement with those who may hold a different opinion.

**Strategy 2: Be unconventionally indirect.**

*“I will begin with what I said in my address on February 21, 2022. I spoke about our biggest concerns and worries, and about the fundamental threats which are irresponsible. Western politicians created for Russia consistently, rudely and unceremoniously from year to year. I am referring to the eastward expansion of NATO, which is moving its military infrastructure ever closer to the Russian border.”* (Datum-13)

Putin linked his recent speech to one he delivered on February 21, 2022. He informed his people that a danger was coming from the West, which he labeled irresponsible. He indirectly addressed concerns and criticisms by attributing them to unnamed “*irresponsible Western politicians*” rather than directly accusing specific individuals or countries. He stated that NATO’s eastward movement posed a threat to Russia. At this point, Putin indirectly hinted at his desire to confront NATO and stop threats from Western countries. Being unconventionally indirect minimized the risk of causing offense or escalating tensions while still expressing concerns.

**Strategy 3: Impersonalize speaker and hearer.**

*“Properly speaking, the attempts to use us in their own interests never ceased until quite recently: they sought to destroy our traditional values and force on us their false values that would erode us, our people from within, the attitudes they have been aggressively imposing on their countries, attitudes that are directly leading to degradation and degeneration, because they are contrary to human nature.”* (Datum-14)

Putin employed this strategy to avoid offending his audience by highlighting that it was not solely his influence but rather the interests of the entire Russian people. Therefore, he utilized the pronouns ‘*us*’ and ‘*our*.’ He emphasized that the United States would never cease exploiting Russia for its own interests. Impersonalization of the speaker and hearer helped maintain politeness by avoiding direct confrontation or blame.

**Strategy 4: State the face-threatening act as a general rule.**

*“In this context, in accordance with Article 51 (Chapter VII) of the UN Charter, with permission of Russia’s Federation Council, and in execution of the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance with the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Lugansk People’s Republic, ratified by the Federal Assembly on February 22, I made a decision to carry out a special military operation.”* (Datum-15)

In his speech, the main point is Putin declared ‘a special military operation’ against Ukraine. Putin stated that this military operation referred to the laws and regulations in

force in Russia. It is one way to communicate that Putin did not want to violate but was only forced by circumstances, stating a face-threatening act as an example of the rules and regulations in force. Putin cited Article 51 (Chapter VII) of the UN Charter, which provided for the inherent right of self-defense, as the basis for the decision. He mentioned obtaining permission from Russia’s Federation Council, which added a layer of formality and suggested that the decision was made through proper channels.

**Strategy 5: Give deference.**

*“I would also like to address the military personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Comrade Officers,”* (Datum-16)

Putin also addressed the military personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces as ‘Comrade Officers,’ showing deference to their status and position. In doing so, Putin showing a positive face towards them through a respectful greeting to mitigate potential face-threatening acts. This acknowledged their identity and status within the military hierarchy, reducing the risk of causing offense or disrespect.

**d. Off-Record Politeness**

Vladimir Putin most often employed the off-record politeness strategy in his speech on the Russian-Ukraine war of 2022. These particular strategies allow Putin to maintain a degree of politeness by avoiding direct imposition on his audience’s faces. Vladimir Putin used language indirectly, implying something general and inviting the audience to interpret his words to grasp the true meaning of his speech. The specific strategies of off-record politeness are as following table:

*Table 4 Off-record politeness strategy in Vladimir Putin’s speech*

No	Off-Record Politeness	Frequency
1	Use rhetorical questions	3
2	Use contradictions	2
3	Be vague	1
	Total	6

**Strategy 1: Use rhetorical question.**

*“Why is this happening? Where did this insolent manner of talking down from the height of their exceptionalism, infallibility and all-permissiveness come from? What is the explanation for this contemptuous and disdainful attitude to our interests and absolutely legitimate demands?”* (Datum-17)

Putin asked three consecutive rhetorical questions regarding events currently occurring in Russia. He said NATO had insulted Russia and underestimated Russia’s demands. Those questions were not ones that the hearer

needed to answer. He used rhetorical questions to ask without intending to get an answer and to carry out face-threatening acts. By asking rhetorical questions, Putin implied his disagreement or confusion about the situation without explicitly stating it.

### **Strategy 2: Use contradiction.**

*"For the United States and its allies, it is a policy of containing Russia, with obvious geopolitical dividends. For our country, it is a matter of life and death, a matter of our historical future as a nation."* (Datum-18)

Vladimir Putin said two contradictory things regarding the different impacts of policies that benefit the United States and matters of life and death for Russia. To create the impression that he could not tell the truth, Putin wanted to encourage his audience to interpret the two conflicting circumstances. The contradiction implied a critique of the policies pursued by the United States and its allies compared to the priorities of "our country." It suggested that while one side saw geopolitical gains, the other side perceived the situation as a matter of existential importance.

### **Strategy 3: Be vague.**

*"I have to recall these facts, because some Western colleagues prefer to forget them, and when we mentioned the event, they prefer to avoid speaking about international law, instead emphasizing the circumstances which they interpret as they think necessary."* (Datum-19)

President Putin did not clarify the subject of his speech. He did not directly identify the target of his remarks. Instead, he referred to his opponents as "Western colleagues" who seemed to have forgotten historical events. These people also tended to manipulate facts to suit their own agenda. By being vague about the subject, Putin avoided direct confrontation with the opponents, maintaining a level of politeness. It allowed Putin to express criticism without directly accusing specific individuals.

The results identified four types of politeness strategies in Vladimir Putin's English transcript speech: bald-on record, positive, negative, and off-record politeness. These strategies varied in frequency, with bald-on record being the most frequently used, followed by positive, negative, and off-record politeness as the least frequently used strategy.

The bald-on-record strategy dominated Putin's speech because he wanted to increase his efficiency in communicating rather than being long-winded and minimizing face-threatening acts (FTA). He also had much higher power than his audience, which allowed him to give orders, commands, decisions, and even threats to his audience or political opponents. Bald-on-record politeness was used when Putin spoke about military or

national security policy, faced criticism, and gave instructions or threats to his audience. These results supports the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), which stated that the primary reason for the general use of the bald-on-record strategy was that the speaker wanted to perform the FTA with maximum efficiency rather than satisfy the hearer's face, even to any degree. He used several specific strategies such as maximum efficiency, metaphorical urgency for emphasis, metaphorical urgency for high valuation of the hearer's friendship, power difference, and warning.

Positive politeness then became the second most common strategy used by Putin in conveying his messages. Putin implemented this strategy to bolster the audience's positive image so that his wants or actions were considered correct and approved by his audience. It involved seeking common ground, emphasizing shared interests, and showing appreciation to create a sense of mutual respect in the conversation (Brown and Levinson, 1987). He used several strategies such as using in-group identity markers, intensifying interest to hearers, asserting the speaker's knowledge, paying attention to the hearer's wants, being optimistic, including both speaker and hearer in the activity, and asserting common ground.

The third politeness strategy was negative politeness. This strategy was not widely used because it did not reflect Putin's assertive, strong, and authoritative leadership style. Nevertheless, he still used this strategy to mitigate the imposition of his words or actions on the audience while maintaining his position of authority, thereby minimizing public criticism. He also maintained social distance from his audience, which is why the off-record strategy was applied. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that negative politeness is likely to be used whenever a speaker wants to put a social brake on the course of his interaction. Some of the strategies he used included being unconventionally indirect, hedging on illocutionary force, impersonalizing the speaker and hearer, stating the face-threatening act as a general rule, and giving deference.

Unlike bald-on-record, the off-record strategy was not widely used in Putin's speeches because it was less consistent with his decisive, strong, and straightforward leadership style. Nevertheless, Putin occasionally employed off-record politeness to convey messages that were implicit and did not directly address his audience. This result aligns with the theory that off-record politeness is a strategy in which a speaker conveys a request, suggestion, or information indirectly, without explicitly stating it (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Some specific strategies of off-record politeness included overstating, using contradictions, using rhetorical questions, and being vague.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

Based on the research, various types of politeness strategies are found in Vladimir Putin's speech on the Russian-Ukraine war in 2022 with several variations of specific strategies. Putin used four types of politeness strategies: bald-on record, positive, negative, and off-record. Bald-on record being the most frequently used (28), followed by positive (16), negative (8), and off-record politeness (6) as the least frequently used strategy.

Some specific strategies of bald-on record politeness were maximum efficiency, metaphorical urgency for emphasis, metaphorical urgency for high valuation of the hearer's friendship, power difference, and warning. In positive politeness, he used several strategies such as using in-group identity markers, intensifying interest to hearers, asserting the speaker's knowledge, paying attention to the hearer's wants, being optimistic, including both speaker and hearer in the activity, and asserting common ground. As for negative politeness, Putin used strategies such as being unconventionally indirect, hedging on illocutionary force, impersonalizing the speaker and hearer, stating the face-threatening act as a general rule, and giving deference. Then, some specific strategies of off-record politeness included overstating, using contradictions, using rhetorical questions, and being vague.

Given the highest number of politeness strategies used, the bald-on-record, Putin wanted to demonstrate his efficiency in communication rather than being long-winded and minimizing face-threatening acts (FTAs). Additionally, as the president of Russia in an autocratic regime, he has full power over the government. It supported his use of bald-on-record politeness, which he employed to make decisions, establish rules, issue orders, and even deliver threats in his speech. He aimed to avoid being long-winded and engaging in small talk so that his message can be received immediately without causing ambiguity. On the other hand, the heavy use of bald-on-record strategies also give the impression of a lack of empathy and understanding, especially towards his political opponents.

### Suggestion

This study is recommended for people in social interactions and specific contexts, such as politics. Politeness strategy can also be used to know what to say, how, and the meaning of the words, especially in public speaking. Determining the type of politeness strategies based on the audience can help ensure that the message conveyed by the speaker is right on target and can be understood by the audience, thereby minimizing face-threatening acts. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study

can further research the analysis of politeness strategies in political speech with different speakers and contexts.

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## APPENDIX

### Types of Politeness Strategies Used by Vladimir Putin in His Speech

*Table 5 Types of Politeness Strategies Used by Vladimir Putin in His Speech*

No	Utterance	Type of Politeness Strategy	Specific Strategy
1	“Citizens of Russia, friends.”	Positive	Use in-group identity marker
2	“I consider it necessary today to speak again about the tragic events in Donbass and the key aspects of ensuring the	Negative	Be unconventionally indirect

	security of Russia.”						
3	“I will begin with what I said in my address on February 21, 2022. I spoke about our biggest concerns and worries, and about the fundamental threats which irresponsible Western politicians created for Russia consistently, rudely and unceremoniously from year to year. I am referring to the eastward expansion of NATO, which is moving its military infrastructure ever closer to the Russian border.”	Negative	Be unconventionally indirect		prefer to forget them, and when we mentioned the event, they prefer to avoid speaking about international law, instead emphasizing the circumstances which they interpret as they think necessary.”		
4	“It is a fact that over the past 30 years we have been patiently trying to come to an agreement with the leading NATO countries regarding the principles of equal and indivisible security in Europe. In response to our proposals, we invariably faced either cynical deception and lies or attempts at pressure and blackmail, while the North Atlantic alliance continued to expand despite our protests and concerns. Its military machine is moving and, as I said, is approaching our very border.”	Positive	Intensify interest to hearer	10	“Incredible and shocking but true. We witnessed lies made at the highest state level and voiced from the high UN rostrum.”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency
5	“Why is this happening? Where did this insolent manner of talking down from the height of their exceptionalism, infallibility and all-permissiveness come from? What is the explanation for this contemptuous and disdainful attitude to our interests and absolutely legitimate demands?”	Off-record	Use rhetorical questions	11	“Sure, one often hears that politics is a dirty business. It could be, but it shouldn’t be as dirty as it is now, not to such an extent.”	Positive	Assert speaker’s knowledge of and concerning for hearer’s wants
6	“The answer is simple.”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency	12	“Where is justice and truth here? Just lies and hypocrisy all around.”	Off-record	Use rhetorical question
7	“Everything is clear and obvious.”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency	13	“Incidentally, US politicians, political scientists and journalists write and say that a veritable “empire of lies” has been created inside the United States in recent years. It is hard to disagree with this – it is really so.”	Negative	Hedge on illocutionary force
8	“Those who refuse to comply are subjected to strong-arm tactics.”	Bald-on record	Warning	14	“Therefore, one can say with good reason and confidence that the whole so-called Western bloc formed by the United States in its own image and likeness is, in its entirety, the very same ‘empire of lies.’”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency
9	“I have to recall these facts, because some Western colleagues	Negative	Hedge on illocutionary force	15	“What victims, what losses we had to sustain and what trials we had to go through at that time before we broke the back of international terrorism in the Caucasus!	Positive	Intensify interest to hearer
				16	“We remember this and will never forget.”	Bald-on record	Metaphorical urgency for emphasis
				17	“Properly speaking, the attempts to use us in their own interests never ceased until quite recently: they sought to destroy our traditional values and force on us their false values that would erode us, our people from within, the	Negative	Impersonalize speaker and hearer

	attitudes they have been aggressively imposing on their countries, attitudes that are directly leading to degradation and degeneration, because they are contrary to human nature.”		
18	“This is not going to happen.”	Bald-on record	Metaphoric al urgency for emphasis
19	“No one has ever succeeded in doing this, nor will they succeed now.”	Bald-on record	Warning
20	“The United States is pursuing its own objectives, while neglecting our interests.”	Off-record	Use contradiction
21	“Of course, this situation begs a question: what next, what are we to expect?”	Off-record	Use rhetorical questions
22	“We will not make this mistake the second time.”	Bald-on record	Metaphoric al urgency for emphasis
23	“We have no right to do so.”	Bald-on record	Power difference
24	“Those who aspire to global dominance have publicly designated Russia as their enemy.”	Bald-on record	Warning
25	“Let me reiterate that we have no illusions in this regard and are extremely realistic in our assessments.”	Bald-on record	Warning
26	“In this context, there should be no doubt for anyone that any potential aggressor will face defeat and ominous consequences should it directly attack our country.”	Bald-on record	Warning
27	“For the United States and its allies, it is a policy of containing Russia, with obvious geopolitical dividends. For our country, it is a matter of life and death, a matter of our historical future as a nation.”	Off-record	Use contradiction
28	“We cannot stay idle and passively observe these developments.”	Negative	Hedge on illocutionar y force
29	“For eight years, for eight endless years we have been doing everything possible to settle the situation by	Positive	Intensify interest to hearer

	peaceful political means.”		
30	“It became impossible to tolerate it.”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency
31	“We will not let this happen.”	Positive	Be optimistic
32	“We respect and will respect their sovereignty, as proven by the assistance we provided to Kazakhstan when it faced tragic events and a challenge in terms of its statehood and integrity. However, Russia cannot feel safe, develop, and exist while facing a permanent threat from the territory of today's Ukraine.”	Positive	Intensify interest to hearer
33	“Let me remind you that in 2000–2005 we used our military to push back against terrorists in the Caucasus and stood up for the integrity of our state.”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency
34	“We had no other choice.”	Bald-on record	Metaphoric al urgency for emphasis
35	“In these circumstances, we have to take bold and immediate action.”	Bald-on record	Power difference
36	“The people's republics of Donbass have asked Russia for help.”	Bald-on record	Metaphoric al urgency for high valuation of hearer's friendship
37	“In this context, in accordance with Article 51 (Chapter VII) of the UN Charter, with permission of Russia's Federation Council, and in execution of the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance with the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic, ratified by the Federal Assembly on February 22, I made a decision to carry out a special military operation.”	Negative	State the face-threatening act as a general rule
38	“The purpose of this operation is to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime.”	Bald-on record	Maximum efficiency
39	“To this end, we will	Bald-on	Maximum

	seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation.”	record	efficiency		
40	“It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force. At the same time, we have been hearing an increasing number of statements coming from the West that there is no need any more to abide by the documents setting forth the outcomes of World War II, as signed by the totalitarian Soviet regime. How can we respond to that?”	Positive	Assert speaker’s knowledge of and concern for hearer’s wants	be, to understand this and to work together with us so as to turn this tragic page as soon as possible and to move forward together, without allowing anyone to interfere in our affairs and our relations but developing them independently, so as to create favorable conditions for overcoming all these problems and to strengthen us from within as a single whole, despite the existence of state borders. I believe in this, in our common future.”	
41	“Citizens of Russia, The culture and values, experience and traditions of our ancestors invariably provided a powerful underpinning for the wellbeing and the very existence of entire states and nations, their success and viability.”	Positive	Intensify interest to hearer	“I believe in this, in our common future.”	Bald-on record Metaphoric al urgency for high valuation of hearer’s friendship
42	“We always need to be strong, but this strength can take on different forms. The “empire of lies,” which I mentioned in the beginning of my speech, proceeds in its policy primarily from rough, direct force. This is when our saying on being “all brawn and no brains” applies.”	Positive	Assert speaker’s knowledge of and concern for hearer’s wants	“I would also like to address the military personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. “Comrade officers...”	Negative Give deference
43	“As I said, we could not act otherwise.”	Bald-on record	Power difference	“Your fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers did not fight the Nazi occupiers and did not defend our common Motherland to allow today’s neo-Nazis to seize power in Ukraine. You swore the oath of allegiance to the Ukrainian people and not to the junta, the people’s adversary which is plundering Ukraine and humiliating the Ukrainian people.”	Positive Assert common ground
44	“The current events have nothing to do with a desire to infringe on the interests of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.”	Off-record	Be vague	“I urge you to refuse to carry out their criminal orders.”	Bald-on record Power difference
45	“I reiterate: we are acting to defend ourselves from the threats created for us and from a worse peril than what is happening now. I am asking you, however hard this may	Positive	Include both speaker and hearer in the activity	“I urge you to immediately lay down arms and go home.”	Bald-on record Power difference
51				“I want to emphasize again that all responsibility for the possible bloodshed will lie fully and wholly with the ruling Ukrainian regime.”	Bald-on record Maximum efficiency
52				“I would now like to say something very important for those who may be tempted to	Bald-on record Warning

	interfere in these developments from the outside. No matter who tries to stand in our way or all the more so create threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history.		
53	“All the necessary decisions in this regard have been taken”	Bald-on record	Power difference
54	“No matter how the events unfold, we are ready.”	Bald-on record	Warning
55	“Dear compatriots, I am certain that devoted soldiers and officers of Russia’s Armed Forces will perform their duty with professionalism and courage. I have no doubt that the government institutions at all levels and specialists will work effectively to guarantee the stability of our economy, financial system and social wellbeing, and the same applies to corporate executives and the entire business community. I hope that all parliamentary parties and civil society take a consolidated, patriotic position.”	Positive	Be optimistic
56	“At the end of the day, the future of Russia is in the hands of its multi-ethnic people, as has always been the case in our history.”	Positive	Be optimistic
57	“This means that the decisions that I made will be executed, that we will achieve the goals we have set, and reliably guarantee the security of our Motherland.”	Positive	Be optimistic
58	“I believe in your support and the invincible force rooted in the love for our Fatherland.”	Positive	Be optimistic