

Politeness Strategies and Cooperation Principle in 'Wonder' Movie

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Abstract

This research discusses the politeness strategies and cooperative principle used by the characters in the movie entitled 'Wonder'. The data of analysis come from the utterances of the characters which are described in descriptive method. The writer used politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and cooperation principle advised by Grice (1975) to analyze the data. The results show that the characters in the movie used four kinds of strategies from Brown and Levinson (1987), those are bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record. The utterances in the movie proves the violation of four maxims namely maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner. As the conclusion, positive politeness is used the most among the characters because it shows their closeness in social distance.

Keywords: Politeness strategies, positive politeness, negative politeness

1. Introduction

Communication in conversation between the speaker and the listener could run well if someone considers other's attitude when they are doing or saying something. It can avoid them to misunderstand each other. However, learners occasionally do not have the capability of understanding what is polite and what is not. It leads them to many misinterpretation and humiliation towards others. It is obvious for speakers to adjust their languages to fit the situations. Septiyani (2016) stated that inappropriate language choices may cause problems since the hearers are being insulted by the speakers. In this case, according to Sadiyah (2015) people who use appropriate words are considered polite and well-mannered people, so the politeness strategies are needed. Politeness is one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others' feelings, to establish levels of mutual comfort, and to promote rapport as stated by Hill, Ide, and Ikuta (1986) as cited in Konrad, Sachiko, and Watts (2005). It means to pay attention to people's feelings. Fraser (1990) and Watts et al. (1992) in Brown (2015) stated that politeness is taken to be the expected background to interaction; it is normally not communicated but consists in following expectations as to appropriate behavior. By saying "thank you" or "excuse me" is not yet included as politeness. Thus, to be considered polite, one should choose appropriate language in speaking.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers' "face". Politeness strategies are used by people to make smooth communication and harmonious interpersonal relationship in communication. The strategies come in oral and written communication. As for oral communication, it can be analyzed from talk show, speech, and movie. Safitri (2015) analyzed

politeness strategies in a movie called *The Big Wedding* and found out that the most frequently used politeness is positive politeness. Dharmayanti (2018) analyzed the Ellen Degeneres' TV shows with Barack Obama as the guest star resulted that she mostly applied positive politeness in the show. There is also an analysis in a speech of Tony Abbott's Speech Concerning Australia-Indonesia Tapping Issue analyzed by Handoko (2014). He used four politeness strategies in his speech yet it is found that he used positive politeness the most.

In order the conversation to become successful, the listener and the speaker should also consider to cooperate each other. For instance, in order to accept a speaker's presuppositions, the listeners need to assume that a speaker who says "my wife", is really married. Thus, people having a conversation are generally assumed to being honest and conveying relevant information. Cooperative principle suggested by Grice (1975) could be the aid to be effective in conversation. Grice (1975) as cited in Yule (1996) stated that the cooperative principle makes your conversational contribution such as is required. In other words, people should give enough information as required, not more or less than it is needed.

Cooperative principle has four maxims as proposed by Grice (1975) in Yule (1996). There are maxims of quality, maxims of quantity, maxims of relation and maxims of manner. The conversation of two people would be most successful if they obey these maxims and its principles. However, people often violate these principles or these maxims, which make the conversation partially successful or simply a failure, or produce conversational implication. Some studies have analyzed the flout or violation in maxims in oral communication. Ibrahim (2018) found that there are four flouting of maxims in the *Seven* movie script. Then, there are three motivations that influenced the characters flouted the maxims; they are competitive, collaborative, and conflictive. The research conducted by Zebua (2017) found that The result reveals that the male participants mostly did the flouting than violating. From the overall of violation and flouting they done, quantity maxim is dominantly flouted by male participants. Also Toda (2017) in her analysis of *Maleficent* Movie shows that there are two patterns of maxims violations namely violation one maxim and more than one maxims. In addition, there are seven reasons used by the characters to violate the maxims. The most frequent reason is hiding the truth, followed by saving face, avoiding discussion, expressing feelings, pleasing the hearer, avoiding punishment, and the last is building someone's belief.

In relation between politeness strategies and cooperative principles according to Cutting (2002), the cooperative principle sometimes conflict with the politeness strategies. If the speakers want to express positive politeness, they may violate cooperative maxims. Since so many studies have been conducted in politeness strategies and cooperative principles the researcher wants to analyze both politeness strategies and the violaton of maxim in the movie called 'Wonder'. Unlike many previous studies which were focus more on romance and fairytale, this movie is a family drama. It portrays the life of Auggie who has face deformity in living his live the first time as a student in a public school. Therefore, the objectives of conducting this study is to find out what kind of politeness strategy mostly occur and what types of maxim violations applied by the characters in *Wonder* movie in expressing the politeness strategies.

2. Literature Review

Pragmatics is the study of meaning of words, phrases and full sentences. According to Yule (1996) pragmatics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms. One can understand people's intended meaning also their goals as they speak. In pragmatics there is a strategy called politeness strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers' "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. They state there are four types of politeness strategies, positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record and off record.

Negative politeness is derived from negative face. Negative politeness strategy (formal politeness/respect politeness) is the attempt of the speaker to minimize the imposition on H or acknowledge H's negative face. Positive politeness on the other hand is intended to avoid giving offense by highlighting friendliness. These strategies include juxtaposing criticism with compliments, establishing common ground, and using jokes, nicknames, honorifics, tag questions, special discourse markers (*please*), and in-group jargon and slang. In bald on record, the speaker does nothing to reduce the threat to the hearer's face and is therefore used in close relationships or when information needs to be shared quickly. While off record is used to completely remove the speaker from any potential to impose on the hearer and only alludes to the speaker's idea or specific request. If a person goes off record, there is more than one possible intention attributable to the speaker, i.e. he/she cannot be 'blamed' to have committed to a certain intention. For example is "I'm so tired. A cup of coffee would help."

According to Grice (1975) says that when we communicate we assume, without realising it, that we, and the people we are talking to, will be conversationally cooperative or we will cooperate to achieve successful conversation. . It means that they have to understand mutually what they are talking the conversation. The maxims of cooperative principle based on Grice (1975):

a. Quantity.

1. Make your contributions as informative as is required
(for the current purpose of the exchange)
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

b. Quality. Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

c. Relation. Be relevant.

d. Manner. Be perspicuous.

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.

It is important to recognize these maxims as unstated assumptions we have in conversations. We assume that people are normally going to provide an appropriate amount of information; we assume that they are telling the truth, being relevant and trying to be as clear as they can. Because these principles are assumed in normal interaction, speakers rarely mention them. However, there are certain kinds of expressions speakers use to mark that they may be in danger of not fully adhering to the principles. These kinds of expressions are called hedges.

3. Method

As this research was conducted in analyzing the politeness strategies and violation of maxim in cooperative principles in the movie entitled *Wonder*, the type of this research was descriptive research. Ary (1990) in Sadiyah (2015) states descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomenon. It explained that a descriptive research is used to give more information or explanation of the utterance which is used by the characters in the movie. The data source was taken from utterances from a movie entitled *Wonder*. The instrument used was the researcher herself because this study was descriptive research and investigating the data (movie script). So, the researcher worked as the instrument and a data collector at the same time. The researcher was the main instrument, because it was impossible to investigate without any interpretation from the researcher.

The researcher uses documentation technique in collecting the data. In collecting the data, the researcher followed some steps; choose a movie, watch the movie, read the movie script, then notice the utterances. To analyze the data, the researcher uses content analysis. The data analysis is done by some steps; identifying the utterances, classifying the data according to the politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson theory and cooperative principles by Grice theory, and drawing a conclusion.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section attempts to answer the research problem, i.e. the politeness strategies used by the characters in a movie entitled *Wonder*.

From the data of *Wonder* utterances, the writer has found 146 cases of politeness that are uttered by the characters. The 146 cases are included in 4 politeness strategies from Brown and Levinson (1987). There are 38 utterances belong to bald on record politeness strategy, 80 utterances for positive politeness strategy, 21 utterances for negative politeness strategy, and 7 utterances for off record politeness strategy. Those data are listed in a figure as follows.

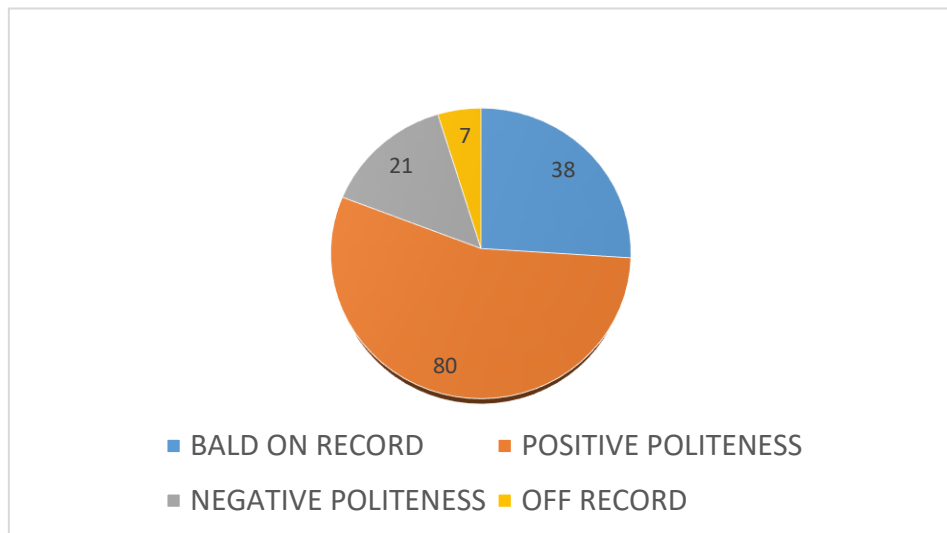


Figure 1. The Result of Politeness Strategies Used in 'Wonder' movie.

It has been stated previously that there are four politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987). There are bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Below are the explanation of the analysis based on four politeness strategies.

a. Bald on record

Bald on record strategy does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. The use of bald on record often will shock or embarrass the addressee. In this case, this strategy can be used where the speaker and the hearer has a close relationship as family or close friends. However, generally speaking, bald on record expressions are associated with speech events where the speaker assumes that he or she has power over the other (for example, in military contexts) and can control the other's behavior with words as stated by Yule (1996). Brown and Levinson (1987) outline various situations where one can use bald on record.

- Situations with no threat minimization

1. Urgency or desperation

Watch out!

2. When efficiency is necessary

Hear me out:...

3. Task-oriented

Pass me the hammer.

4. Little or no desire to maintain someone's face

Don't forget to clean the blinds!

5. Doing the face-threatening act is in the interest of the hearer

Your headlights are on!

- Situations where the threat is minimized implicitly
- 6. Welcomes
Come in.
- 7. Offers
Leave it, I'll clean up later.
Eat!

In this study, there are 38 cases of bald on record strategy, yet the writer only gives two as examples of discussion. First is for the example of the situation which is no threat minimization and the second is for the example of the situation where the threat is minimized implicitly. The first bald on record strategy is described in the following utterance.

Data 1

Setting : At the hospital

Situation : Mrs. Pullman is giving birth to a baby boy who is Auggie.

Mrs. Pullman: Where's the baby going? *Go with the baby!*

The italic sentence is Mrs. Pullman utterance which is categorized as bald on record. She uttered the utterance above because she showed urgency to her husband. It is stated above that there are some characteristics of bald on record. One of them is urgency or desperation. Thus, she expressed instruction based on urgency.

The following data is the second example of bald on record strategy.

Data 2

Setting : At the canteen.

Situation : Julian the spoiled kid who dislikes Auggie offers Jack a seat among his gank.

Julian :Oh, hey, Jack, *come sit with us.*

Amos : Yeah, *come on*, man.

The italic utterance above shows that Julian and Amos asked Jack to join them. The situation also shows that the threat is minimized implicitly. Therefore, what Julian and Amos said was an offer to Jack.

b. Positive politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of the hearer, the positive self-image that he claims for himself and his perennial desire that his wants (or action/acquisition/values/resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Positive politeness strategies seek to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. Positive

politeness utterances are not only used by the participants who have known each other fairly well, but also used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy to imply common ground or to sharing of wants to limited extent between strangers. For the same reason, positive politeness techniques are usable not only for FTA redress, but in general as a kind of social accelerator for the speaker in using them indicates that he wants to 'come closer' to the hearer. The following lists are examples from Brown and Levinson:

1. Attend to H's interests, needs, wants
You look sad. Can I do anything?
2. Use solidarity in-group identity markers
Heh, mate, can you lend me a dollar?
3. Be optimistic
I'll just come along, if you don't mind.
4. Include both speaker (S) and hearer (H) in activity
If we help each other, I guess, we'll both sink or swim in this course.
5. Offer or promise
If you wash the dishes, I'll vacuum the floor.
6. Exaggerate interest in H and his interests
That's a nice haircut you got; where did you get it?
7. Avoid Disagreement
Yes, it's rather long; not short certainly
8. Joke
Wow, that's a whopper!

In this study, there are 80 cases of positive politeness strategy, yet the writer only gives one as an example of discussion. The positive politeness strategy is described in the following utterance.

Data 3

Setting : At the school gate

Situation : Auggie's first day of school and his entire family sent him off. Then, his father wanted to talk to him in private.

Mr. Pullman : Now, I gotta stop here, because past this point is a No Dad Zone and you don't wanna walk up with your parents because it's not cool.

Auggie : *But you're cool.*

Mr. Pullman : I know I am, but technically most dads aren't, so... And neither are these helmets.

The writer finds the positive politeness strategy in the underlined and italicized sentence. One of the parts of positive politeness strategy is exaggerate interest in hearer and his interests. In this case, compliment is included. Mr. Pullman was trying to encourage Auggie by talking about being not cool if students walk

with their parents and Auggie said that his father was cool. It was his compliment for his father. Thus, Auggie's statement is an example of exaggerate interest in hearer. In this conversation there is also a violation of maxim of relevance. Since Mr. Pullman' answer about helmet is not relevant with their previous topic, hence it is taken as violating maxim of relevance.

c. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness strategies are oriented towards the hearer's negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. By attempting to avoid imposition from the speaker, the risk of face-threat to the hearer is reduced. According to Yule (1996), using this strategy also results in forms which contain expressions of apology for the imposition. It is also worth noting that negative politeness is typically expressed via questions, even questions that seem to ask for permission to ask a question (for example, 'Might I ask...?'). The characteristics of negative politeness are self-effacement; formality and restraint, with attention to very limited aspects of H's self- image, focusing on H's want to be unimpeded. Examples from Brown and Levinson (1987) include:

- Be indirect
Would you know where Oxford Street is?
- Use hedges or questions
Perhaps, he might have taken it, maybe.
Could you please pass the rice?
- Be pessimistic
You couldn't find your way to lending me a thousand dollars, could you?
So I suppose some help is out of the question, then?
- Minimize the imposition
It's not too much out of your way, just a couple of blocks.
- Use obviating structures, like nominalizations, passives, or statements of general rules
I hope offense will not be taken.
Visitors sign the ledger.
Spitting will not be tolerated.
- Apologetic
I'm sorry; it's a lot to ask, but can you lend me a thousand dollars?
- Use plural pronouns
We regret to inform you

There are 21 cases of negative politeness strategy, yet the writer only gives one as an example of discussion. The negative politeness strategy is described in the following utterance.

Data 5

Setting : At the laboratory

Situation : Auggie was introduced around the school for the first time by some kids. Julian was so snobby and he behaved badly.

Auggie : No, I wasn't in a fire. And the word's "supposedly."

Julian : What?

Auggie : You said that science is supposedly really hard. Twice. The word's "supposedly." "With a "D." *Maybe my mom can home school you, too.*

The last utterance said by Auggie is a part of negative politeness strategy. It has been mentioned above that negative politeness strategy has several situations in which the negative politeness strategy could be uttered. One of the examples is using hedges or question. Auggie gave reaction towards Julian snobbish act by saying '*maybe*'. This utterance also included as violation of maxim of quality because Auggie used sarcasm to reply Julian's word. In conclusion, Auggie's word is a part of negative politeness strategy and violation of maxim of quality.

d. Off record

This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposed. Even if the speaker decides to say something, the speaker does not actually have to ask for anything. Yule (1996) stated that the types of statements are not directly addresses to the other. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) a communicative act is done off-record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. Therefore if a speaker wants to do an FTA, and chooses to do it indirectly, he must give the hearer some hints and hope that the hearer picks up on them and thereby interprets what the speaker really means (intends) to say.

Data 5

Setting : At the The Pullman's

Situation : Justin came by and was curious of Auggie's science project in the middle of the house.

Justin : *It's a camera obscura.*

Olivia : Yeah. He's ten.

The off record strategy was uttered by Justin. In off record strategy, speaker must do implication first then it is up to the hearer whether or not he wants to do something because of the speaker's saying. The off record strategy relies heavily on pragmatics to convey the intended meaning while still utilizing the semantic meaning as a way to avoid losing face. In this case after Justin talked to himself, Olivia replied it. The way Olivia replied was taken as violation maxim of quantity because she added information that was not needed.

In this study there are 146 utterances that are included as politeness strategies in the movie. Most of the characters used Positive politeness when uttered their utterance. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) there are two factors that influence of choosing strategies. They are payoff and circumstances (social distance, relative power and size of imposition). According to Maisaroh (2015) in her study Positive Politeness Strategy used by characters in *Memoirs of Geisha* novel, the most factors that influence chosen polite strategies used by characters in *Memoirs of Geisha* novel based on the Brown and Levinson theory is social distance. The analysis of politeness strategies in *Bride Wars* movie conducted by Septiyani (2016) showed that positive politeness had dominant result. The reason was because the characters tended to show their feelings and care towards the other who were also close with them. The social distance of the characters might influence the utterance. Due to its genre as family drama, there are parents, children, friends and best friends in *Wonder* who may use the positive politeness towards someone they are close to. It is also to show their friendship or closeness, solidarity and compliments. It is also found that in some of the politeness strategies utterances there are four violation of maxims namely maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there are 146 utterances of politeness strategies used in the movie. Out of four strategies from Brown and Levinson (1987), the characters used four strategies; bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record. Positive politeness is mostly used by the characters as they uttered something. This may happen because of the social distance every character has as family and friends. There are also violated maxims from cooperative principles in several utterances of politeness strategies. For further research, the researcher might want to do research of politeness strategies, cooperative principle and also illocutionary act from the novel. It can identify each elements in politeness strategies, maxims and also the kind of illocutionary act of novel.

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