

## **POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED IN “A BRILLIANT YOUNG MIND” MOVIE: A PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

This study discusses the use of politeness strategies in the movie “A Brilliant Young Mind.” To conduct the study, the researcher formulated the following questions: What types of politeness strategies are used in the movie, and which politeness strategies are most dominant in the movie “A Brilliant Young Mind”? The researcher used the theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Data was collected through descriptive qualitative research and document analysis, using YouTube. The subject of this research was the movie “A Brilliant Young Mind,” while the object was the four types of politeness strategies. The data collection technique was carried out by first searching for the movie title on YouTube, watching the movie, identifying and transcribing the dialogue, then analyzing it into the four types of politeness strategies. The data analysis technique used the theory proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994). The results of the data analysis show that bald on-record appeared 15 times with a percentage of 24.19%, positive politeness appeared 28 times with a percentage of 45.16%, negative politeness appeared 12 times with a percentage of 19.35%, and off-record appeared 7 times with a percentage of 11.29%. The positive politeness strategy was the most dominant type used by the characters, with the highest frequency and percentage compared to other strategies. This shows that the characters in the movie mostly used strategies that emphasized closeness, attention, and empathy to build harmonious social relationships

**Keywords:** *pragmatics, Politeness strategies, movie*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is the main tool in communicating and building social relationships. Through language, humans can express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and form meaningful interactions. In the communication process, the use of language does not only concern grammatical structures, but also includes ways of delivery that consider the norms and values of politeness that apply in society. Richards, Platt & Weber (1985 : 153) as cited by (Rahmat et al., 2023), Language is a human communication system expressed through a structured arrangement of sounds or written expressions from larger units, such as morphemes, words, and sentences. In Indonesia, the languages that are often used in communication include Indonesian and English. These two languages are often used for schools and companies. And each language has a different grammar.

Meanwhile, linguistics is the scientific study of language that examines structure, sound system, meaning, and how language is used in different contexts systematically and objectively. According to Frmkina et al (2021) as cited by (Evizariza, 2024), Linguistics as a scientific discipline aims to understand everything about language: how it is structured, how its meaning is formed and interpreted, how it is used in various situations, and how it changes over time. Linguistics allows us to understand how language works, how meaning is formed and organized, and how language is used to build social relationships. One branch of linguistics that is closely related to the use of language in social contexts is pragmatics (Clins et al., 2021).

Through the study of pragmatics, we can find out how speakers use language effectively and politely in various communication situations, including in audio-visual works such as movies. Yule (1996 : 3) as cited by (Qizi, 2021), Say that pragmatics is a branch of linguistics focused on studying the meaning of utterances in real contexts of use. Pragmatics pays attention to how meaning can change or develop. Therefore, pragmatics is derived from the context of the situation, the speaker's intention, and the listener's interpretation. Levinson (1983 : 21) as cited by (Supriyadi, 2024), Say that Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding. The context referred to in the study of pragmatics has become a unified and structured part of the

language itself, so it cannot be separated from the form and way language is used. Therefore, this research will focus on the discussion of politeness strategies in communication. In pragmatics, politeness is a form of behavior or language use that shows appreciation, respect, and consideration for the feelings and rights of others in social and communication contexts. Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) as cited by (Helena Dewi Irawansari & Ni Nyman Deni Ariyaningsih, 2024), classifies the strategy of decency into four types: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off-record. They argue that in verbal interactions, speakers tend to use certain strategies to maintain the face of the interlocutor and avoid direct arguments or conflict. Each strategy is used based on the social context, the relationship between speakers and speech partners, and the level of face-threatening acts. In practice, these strategies are used to maintain communication harmony. For example, on the other hand, bald-on record is used in situations that demand direct clarity without preamble, positive politeness is used to create emotional closeness and solidarity between participants, while negative politeness emphasizes more on respecting the interlocutor's freedom and personal space. Meanwhile, off-record involves indirect strategies that allow the interlocutor to interpret the intent implicitly.

As such, the selection of these communication strategies reflects real-life social awareness and the ability to adjust to the context of interaction. And understanding when and how to use each of these strategies can increase the effectiveness of communication and strengthen relationships between individuals. So politeness is the most important feature for human behavior both in the community, at school, and even in the family. However, today's children are often influenced by social media and technology, which leads to communication patterns that pay little attention to civility norms. In digital platforms, the use of abusive language and sarcasm is often considered normal, so children tend to carry this behavior into face-to-face interactions, which can result in a lack of respect for teachers, parents and peers. The impact of this lack of politeness is not only limited to interpersonal relationships, but can also affect social dynamics more broadly. Children's inability to communicate politely can hinder them in building healthy and respectful relationships, potentially leading to conflict and social isolation. Therefore, it is important for parents, educators and society to set a good example and emphasize the value of politeness. Through education that emphasizes empathy and effective communication skills, we can help children understand that civility is the foundation for positive relationships. Raising awareness of the importance of civility in communication should be a priority, so that future generations can interact well in a variety of contexts. Politeness in communication is made a difficult act to do in everyday life, even though politeness is the key to establishing good communication with others.

Media is a means of communication channel. Media serves as a crucial element in delivering messages effectively during the communication process, ensuring clarity and understanding for the audience. Without media, messages may not be well comprehended, hindering goal achievement. The primary function of media is to enhance the reception and comprehension of information being conveyed. Gerlach and Ely (1971) as cited by (Kamaludin, 2020), say that media can encompass humans, materials, and events that facilitate knowledge acquisition. Different forms of media exist, including visual (images, videos), audio (radio, sound recordings), and audiovisual (movies, television). Selecting the appropriate media is reliant on the specific objectives, content, student characteristics, and learning environment conditions. A movie is an audio-visual medium that is played back in the form of animated images to convey messages, stories, and information to the audience. Movies combine various elements such as images, dialogue, sound, and music to create a narrative and emotional experience. This creates an engaging atmosphere and facilitates audience understanding of the plot through the portrayal of character expressions. (Rifshandya et al., 2024) argues that movie is a medium that can represent social and cultural realities that can represent social and cultural realities, not only as entertainment but also as a communication tool that can be accessed by all groups. In this study, one of the relevant movies to be studied from the point of view of politeness strategies is *A Brilliant Young Mind*.

The movie *A Brilliant Young Mind*, also known as *X+Y*, depicts the life of Nathan, a teenage math genius with autism. In this movie, viewers can see the communication challenges that Nathan faces, as well as how his interactions with those around him take place. Nathan often exhibits a *the-pint* style of speech, without using politeness markers or mitigation strategies, which often leads to misunderstandings in communication. On the other hand, his interlocutors often adjust their way of communicating so that Nathan feels comfortable and understands the message conveyed and they are more respectful and always provide support to Nathan in every activity he does. In the context of the movie, it can be observed that politeness strategies are used both by the main character and by other characters in adjusting the way of communication. Besides contributing to theoretical studies, this research also has practical implications, especially in education. By understanding how politeness strategies are used or not used by individuals with autism, it is hoped that people can better understand the communication challenges they face and be able to adjust how to interact more empathetically. The analysis was conducted using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as the main framework. This research aims to find out how other characters adapt their communication strategies in response to Nathan's unique communication style and analyze the most frequent politeness strategies in the movie.

Example:

Cntext

Nathan is talking t his mther, Julie, wh is trying t cmfirt him after his father’s death.

Julie : “I just want yu t knw that I lve yu.”

Nathan : “But I dn’t feel the same.”

The illustratin shws that Nathan, a character with autism, ften uses the bald n recrd strategy because he has difficulty in understanding scial nrms related t empathy and respect fr thers’ feelings. His straightforward way f speaking demnstrates his inability t recgnize and respnd t the emtinal needs f his interlcutr. While Nathan’s cmmunicatin style may be cnsidered disrespectful in the cntext f everyday cnversatin, it actually reflects a cmmn cmmunicatin pattern amng peple with autism, which emphasizes hnesty ver sensitivity t the feelings f thers. Previous studies related t this research, including n by (Andi Nurul Aini, Dwi Setiyadi, 2024) entitled “An Analysis f Pliteness in Ywisben Mvie (Bayu Skak)”. This study describes the types f pliteness strategies in the mvie Ywis Ben. Researchers used descriptive qualitative methds. In the findings, there are 15 utterances related t direct pliteness strategy, 21 utterances related t psitive pliteness strategy, 12 utterances related t the use f negative pliteness strategy, and 1 utterance related t the use f indirect pliteness strategy. Therefore, the mst dminant pliteness strategy used by the characters in cmmunicatin is psitive pliteness (43%) in its use in the mvie Ywis Ben, the psitive pliteness strategy is used t facilitate interactin between characters.

Then, accrding t (Sulistya Sudeni, 2022), with the title “An Analysis f Students-Educatr’s Pliteness Strategy Tward nline Cmmunicatin in Efl Cntext”. In this study, it aims t analyze the use f pliteness strategies in cmmunicatin between teachers and students in EFL and analyze what types f strategies are used by teachers and students in cmmunicatin. The researcher used literature research methd and case study methd t analyze the data. The strategies ften used by students are psitive pliteness and bld n recrd while negative pliteness and ff-recrd strategies are mstly used by teachers. In this study it was als fund that students use pliteness mre than their teachers. Additinally, (Annisa et al., 2024), with the title “An Analysis f Pliteness Strategies f the Main Characters in ‘Enla Hlmes 2’ Mvie”. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach, fcusing n the utterances f the main characters in the mvie. The data clectin methd used was mvie bservatin. The results shwed that 221 pliteness strategy data were fund in the mvie “Enla Hlmes 2” including Bald-n Recrd 80 data (36%), Psitive Pliteness 90 data (41%), Negative Pliteness 9 data (4%), and ff-Recrd 42 data (19%). The type f pliteness strategy that appears mst ften in the mvie “Enla Hlmes 2” is Psitive Pliteness. verall, psitive pliteness strategy becmes the main chice in varius verbal interactins because it is able t create a harmnius, friendly, and effective cmmunicatin atmsphere, bth in the cntext f the mvie and in the educatinal envirnment.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the politeness strategies used in the movie "A Brilliant Young Mind" (2014). The primary data source for this study is the movie itself, which was accessed via YouTube. The researcher selected the main characters and their dialogues as the focus of analysis. Data collection involved identifying, transcribing, and categorizing the dialogue from the movie into the four types of politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), namely bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework, involving data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The researcher focused on scenes depicting various interpersonal interactions, particularly those involving Nathan, a teenage character with autism, to observe the adaptation of communication strategies by other characters in response to his unique communication style. The findings of this study aim to identify the dominant politeness strategies employed and explore their implications for effective communication in social contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the researcher presents findings on the analysis of politeness strategies used by the main characters in the film A Brilliant Young Mind. Data was collected from characters' utterances containing politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, which consists of four main types: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Each finding is presented and analyzed to identify the type of strategy used, along with the context of the conversation. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear picture of how politeness strategies are manifested in dialogue and to answer the research questions stated in Chapter I.

From the analysis of the data above, it is found that:

There are four types of politeness strategies found in the movie “A Brilliant Young Mind”. They are: Bald on-record (15), Positive politeness (28), Negative politeness (12), and Off-record (7).

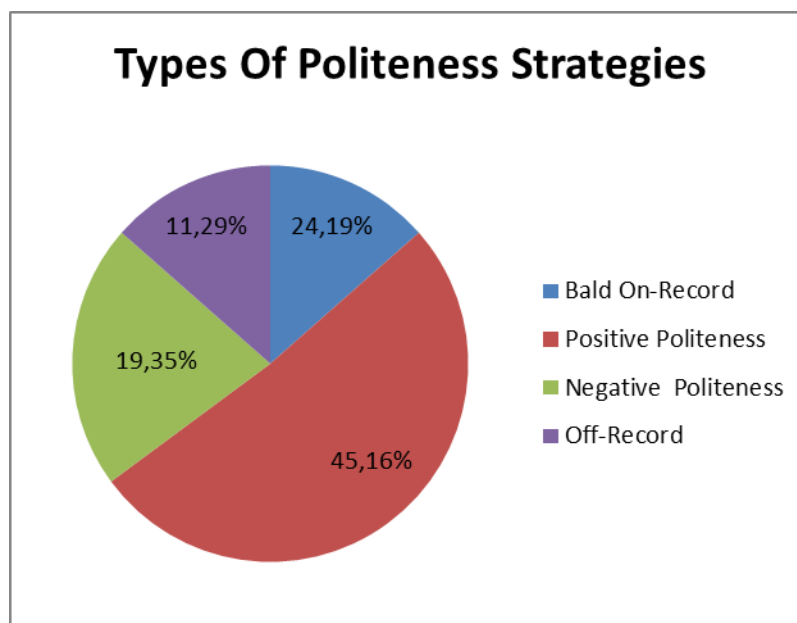
Table 4.1 Data findings of politeness strategies

NO	Types politeness strategies	Frequency
1	Bald on-record	15
2	Positive Politeness	28
3	Negative Politeness	12
4	Off-record	7
Total		62

The results of the data analysis show that the most dominant type of politeness strategy in the movie “A Brilliant Young Mind” is the positive politeness strategy. This strategy is used by both speakers and listeners with the aim of strengthening the social relationship between them by creating a friendly and warm atmosphere. This strategy is used so that the interlocutor feels valued, accepted, and acknowledged. By building a sense of solidarity and closeness, this strategy helps minimize the threat to positive face that may arise in conversation. In addition, positive politeness strategies also serve to enhance cooperation, reduce social distance, and make interactions more comfortable and harmonious. Based on the data collected, the researchers presented the percentage of politeness strategy usage in tabular form. The percentage calculations were performed to show a clear comparison between each type of strategy found in the data. In this way, readers can more easily see which strategies are most dominant and how each strategy is distributed in conversations.

Table 4.2 Data Percentage

NO	Types of politeness	Frequency	Percentage
1	Bald on-record	15	24,19%
2	Positive politeness	28	45,16%
3	Negative politeness	12	19,35%
4	Off-record	7	11,29%
Total		62	100%



Based on the diagram above, there are clear differences between the four types of politeness strategies used in the film A Brilliant Young Mind. The diagram shows that positive politeness strategies occupy a dominant position with a frequency of 28 times (45.16%). This figure is much higher than the bald on-record strategy, which

only appears 15 times (24.19%), negative politeness 12 times (19.35%), and off-record, which is the least, only 7 times (11.29%). This difference proves that in interactions between characters, the main tendency is to build closeness, solidarity, and emotional support through positive strategies. Meanwhile, the bald on-record strategy tends to appear in certain contexts that demand direct clarity, for example, when the characters' emotions are strong or when communication must be understood immediately. The negative politeness strategy is used when the speaker tries to maintain distance or respect the freedom of the interlocutor, while the off-record strategy is used in situations that require subtlety and allow room for interpretation.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the research findings, out of a total of 208 utterances collected from the movie *A Brilliant Young Mind*, the researcher analyzed 137 utterances that were considered relevant and met the criteria of the study regarding politeness strategies. This data selection was carried out to ensure that the analysis focused on interactions containing significant pragmatic elements, making the results more accurate and representative of the use of politeness strategies in the movie. The analysis revealed that positive politeness was the most dominant strategy, appearing in various interaction contexts among the characters. This strategy often manifested in the form of compliments, offers of assistance, including the hearer in activities, and expressions of care or empathy. This indicates that the characters in the film attempt to build social closeness and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships, particularly in situations requiring emotional support.

In addition, bald on-record occurred in moments when characters needed to deliver information or instructions directly and efficiently. This strategy is seen in utterances that are straightforward without any mitigation, such as giving directions or responding directly to questions. The use of this strategy indicates that communication effectiveness is sometimes prioritized over minimizing face threats, especially in close or urgent contexts. Meanwhile, negative politeness and off-record strategies appeared less frequently. Negative politeness was used when characters wanted to maintain distance, respect the hearer's autonomy, or reduce potential conflict. Off-record strategy appeared when characters preferred to convey their intentions indirectly, allowing room for interpretation by the hearer. The combination of these four strategies reflects the flexibility of characters in adjusting their communication according to context, social relationships, and communication goals.

Overall, this analysis shows that *A Brilliant Young Mind* not only presents a story but also depicts realistic social dynamics through language. The politeness strategies used reflect the social, cultural, and psychological awareness of the characters and demonstrate how pragmatic interactions can influence interpersonal relationships in real life. The research conducted by Ricky (2024) entitled "A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies in *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*" has similarities with this research. Both studies use Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory as an analytical framework to classify forms of politeness strategies into four main categories: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. In addition, both use a pragmatic approach and qualitative descriptive methods, where data is collected through observation and recording of the characters' speech in the film. After the data was collected, the speech containing politeness strategies was analyzed contextually to find the types of strategies used and describe how these strategies functioned in building communication between characters. Thus, these two studies have similarities in their objectives, namely to identify and explain the use of politeness strategies in film character conversations, as well as to find the most dominant strategies uses.

The difference in this study lies in the research object. Ricky (2024) studied the movie "*Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*", which is set in Indonesian culture and highlights traditional values of modesty, social relationships, and norms of politeness in the context of Malay culture. Meanwhile, this study analyzes the film *A Brilliant Young Mind*, which comes from a Western (British) cultural context, focusing on social interactions between characters with complex psychological and social backgrounds, such as autism and emotional relationships between teachers, students, and families. Furthermore, Ricky's (2024) research on the movie "*Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*" shows that positive politeness and bald on-record are the most common data analysis, while in this study, positive politeness is the most dominant in the data analysis. Thus, this study provides a cross-cultural perspective on how politeness is manifested in the context of modern Western communication. Therefore, although both studies have similar theoretical frameworks and methods, the study "Politeness Strategies Used in *A Brilliant Young Mind* Movie: A Pragmatic Perspective" offers a more in-depth approach to the

relationship between language, emotion, and social identity, as well as providing new contextual contributions in the field of cross-cultural pragmatic studies.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of politeness strategies in *A Brilliant Young Mind* reveals that the characters consistently apply Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as part of their communication. The movie demonstrates how politeness plays an essential role in shaping interpersonal interactions, particularly in building relationships, expressing emotions, and reducing potential conflicts. The findings show that both positive and negative politeness strategies appear significantly, depending on the context and the relationship between the speakers. Positive politeness strategies are dominant throughout the dialogues, reflecting the characters' efforts to maintain solidarity and closeness. Strategies such as giving compliments, showing concern, and including both speaker and hearer in an activity are frequently used. These strategies highlight the importance of empathy, cooperation, and emotional support in the movie, especially in Nathan's interactions with his teacher, mother, and close friends. Negative politeness strategies are also identified, though in fewer instances. They are mostly used when the characters need to show respect, maintain distance, or avoid imposing on others. Such strategies appear in situations where characters are unsure, nervous, or dealing with authority figures. Meanwhile, bald on-record strategies are employed when efficiency and directness are prioritized, often in contexts of urgency or strong familiarity between interlocutors. Off-record strategies also occur when speakers prefer to imply rather than state explicitly, leaving room for interpretation. Overall, the research concludes that politeness strategies in *A Brilliant Young Mind* are not only linguistic choices but also social tools. The politeness strategy in the film *A Brilliant Young Mind* not only functions as a linguistic choice for polite speech, but also as a social tool that helps build relationships between characters. Through the use of strategies such as positive politeness by Julie and bald on-record by Mr. Humphries, language plays a role in fostering empathy, emotional support, and social closeness. An example of Julie's use of positive politeness towards Nathan can be seen in the following conversation:

Julie : “Hey, gosh, that looks complicated. That's not so hard then, hey? Why don't you try explaining it to me? I might be able to help you.”

Nathan: “Hmm.”

Her words reflect the strategy of positive politeness because she tries to build closeness and solidarity with Nathan through support and empathy. Thus, politeness is an important means of creating harmony, maintaining balance in interpersonal relationships, and reflecting cultural and psychological values in human communication. They serve to negotiate relationships, demonstrate cultural values, and reflect the psychological state of the characters. This supports the notion that language use in film reflects real-life communication, where politeness is essential in maintaining harmony and expressing identity within social interactions.

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