

## POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY THE CHARACTERS OF *BROOKLYN NINE-NINE* TELEVISION SERIES

Meutia Pelangi Naghia, Sri Mulatsih  
Universitas Dian Nuswantoro  
Semarang  
([sinozijak@gmail.com](mailto:sinozijak@gmail.com))

**Abstract:** Brooklyn Nine-Nine is an American comedy series directed by Dan Goor and Michael Schur. The story of this series is about a team of detectives in Brooklyn's fictional 99<sup>th</sup> Precinct. In this sitcom, the characters used politeness strategies in their conversation with others. This study aims to analyse and determine the types of politeness strategies used by the characters of "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" sitcom. This research is categorized into descriptive qualitative. The data were taken from a transcript of Brooklyn Nine-Nine episode 1 season 1. The data were analysed based on the framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The findings of the research show that there are four variants of politeness strategies used by the characters in the film: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Bald on record and positive politeness strategies are mostly used because they are friends and they have known each other.

**Keywords:** Politeness Strategies, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, Pragmatics

**Abstrak:** *Brooklyn Nine-Nine merupakan sitcom televisi Amerika yang disutradarai oleh Dan Goor dan Michael Schur. Seri ini menceritakan tentang tim detektif di Distrik 99 Brooklyn. Dalam sitcom ini, para pemain menggunakan strategi kesantunan (politeness strategies) dalam percakapan mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan menentukan jenis strategi kesantunan (politeness strategies) yang digunakan oleh karakter Brooklyn Nine-Nine. Data yang digunakan diambil dari transkrip Brooklyn Nine-Nine episode 1 season 1. Data ini dianalisis berdasarkan strategi kesantunan (politeness strategies) yang dikemukakan oleh Brown dan Levinson (1987). Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada empat jenis strategi kesantunan (politeness strategies) yang digunakan: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, dan off record. Bald on record dan positive politeness merupakan strategi kesantunan yang paling banyak digunakan karena karakter dalam Brooklyn Nine-Nine berteman satu sama lain.*

**Kata kunci:** *Politeness Strategies, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, Pragmatics*

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In human interaction, the success of communication is depending on how the speakers and hearers understand each other. This means when people communicate, both speakers and hearers have to pay attention to the contents of information and the ways of transferring the message in order to get good communication. One important aspect in good communication is politeness.

Politeness is a set of strategies to show awareness of a person's face. There are four classifications of politeness strategies: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Politeness can occur in every utterance including utterances in a series or movies. Referring to it, politeness strategies in utterances of a series or movies are still important issues to be explored. Therefore, the researcher wants to analyse the politeness strategies in a series called Brooklyn Nine-Nine.

Brooklyn Nine-Nine is an American comedy series directed by Dan Goor and Michael Schur. The story of this series is about a team of detectives in Brooklyn's fictional 99<sup>th</sup> Precinct. This study focuses on the use of politeness strategies in some utterances in Brooklyn Nine-Nine episode 1 season 1.

Based on the introduction above, study aims to determine the politeness strategies used by the characters of Brooklyn Nine-Nine. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the study of politeness strategies in a sitcom.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies about how context affects meaning; it depends on how the speakers and hearers interpreted an utterance. Crystal (1987:120) stated that pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effect of our choice on others. In theory, we can say anything we like. In practice, we follow a large number of social rules (most of them unconsciously) that constrain the way we speak.

### 2. Politeness Strategies

According to Yule (1996: 60), politeness can be defined as a means to show awareness of a person's face. Politeness is a set of strategies that human beings have evolved for managing these every day threats to the safety of social interaction. Therefore, politeness strategies are strategies that are used to manage and avoid the face threatening actions. There are four classifications of politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987:92): bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record (indirect).

#### a. Bald On-Record

People who want to do FTA with maximum efficiency usually use bald on record strategy. The function of this strategy itself is to shocking the person whom you are speaking to. There are two classes in bald on-record strategy: those where FTA is not minimized and those where in doing FTA. Below are the sub-strategies of bald on-record strategy:

- Strategy 1: Case of non-minimization of the face threat. Speaker and hearer know that maximum efficiency is important, no face
- Strategy 2: Case of FTA-oriented Bald on-record usage. Face oriented strategy. Usually used in welcomings, farewell, and offers.

The example of bald on-record strategy is *Listen, I know you won't like it, but you have to go to him*. This example shows urgency so it is categorized as bald on-record.

## b. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is strategy which function is to praise someone in order to satisfy them and emphasize closeness between speaker and hearer. This strategy usually used by people who have known each other for a long time. Below are the sub-strategies of positive politeness:

- Strategy 1: Notice, attend to hearer (his interests, needs, goods), a strategy that used by speaker to satisfy the hearer.
- Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer), speaker used exaggerate intonation to show interest.
- Strategy 3: Intensify the hearer, speaker includes hearer into the middle of events to intensify the speaker's interest.
- Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers, there are three sub-strategies, they are in group usages of address, use of jargon or slang, and contradiction or ellipsis
- Strategy 5: Seek agreement, speaker stresses emotional agreement
- Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement, speaker pretends to agree by twisting their words
- Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground, there are seven sub-strategies. They are personal center-switch, the usage of tag question, place switch, presuppose knowledge of hearer's wants, presuppose familiarity, presuppose hearer's knowledge, and the usage of pronoun that hasn't been made clear.
- Strategy 8: Joke, technique to put hearer at ease
- Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants, a way to indicate that the speaker and hearer are cooperations and to put pressure on hearer.
- Strategy 10: Offer, promise, to redress potential of FTA, the speaker will help to obtain what the hearer wants.
- Strategy 11: Be optimistic, speaker assumes that hearer wants speaker's wants for hearer
- Strategy 12: Include both speaker and hearer in the activity, speaker uses an inclusive 'people' while there is only 'you' or 'me'
- Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons, speaker gives reasons as to why he wants what he wants and assumes that if there are no good reasons why hearer shouldn't or can't cooperate, they will.
- Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity, speaker wants ask hearer to cooperate with them by giving evidence of habit or obligations obtained between speaker and hearer.
- Strategy 15: Give hints to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation), speaker may satisfy hearer's positive face wants but actually satisfying some of hearer's wants.

The example of this strategy is *Look at how cute you are after cutting your bangs!* This example is categorized into strategy 1 of positive politeness since it shows that the speaker notices something (hearer cuts her bangs). In this classification, positive politeness has fifteen sub-strategies.

### c. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is strategy that commonly used when there are some social distance or in awkward situations. According to Brown and Levinson, there are ten sub-strategies in negative politeness. Below are the sub-strategies of negative politeness:

- Strategy 1: Be conventionally indirect, a speaker is faced with opposing tensions: the desire to give hearer an 'out' by being indirect, and the desire to go on record.
- Strategy 2: Question, hedge, enjoins the speaker to question or hedge such assumptions.
- Strategy 3: Be pessimistic, gives redress to hearer's negative face by explicitly expressing doubt that the conditions for the appropriateness of speaker's speech act obtain.
- Strategy 4: Minimize the imposition, indirectly may pay hearer defense.
- Strategy 5: Give deference, speaker humbles themselves, their capacities, and possessions, namely that which satisfies hearer's wants to be treated as superior.
- Strategy 6: Apologize, by apologizing for doing an FTA, the speaker can indicate his reluctance to impinge on hearer's negative face and thereby partially redress that impingement.
- Strategy 7: Impersonalize speaker and hearer, one way to indicating that speaker doesn't want to impinge on hearer so to phrase the FTA as if the agent were other than speaker, or at least possibly not speaker or not speaker alone, and the addressee were other than hearer, or only inclusive of hearer.
- Strategy 8: State the FTA as a general rule, one way of dissociating speaker and hearer from the particular imposition in the FTA, and hence a way of communicating that speaker doesn't want to impinge but is merely forced to by circumstances, is to state the FTA as an instance of some general social rule, regulation, or obligation.
- Strategy 9: Nominalize, in English, degrees of negative politeness run hand in hand with degrees of nouniness, that is, formality is associated with the noun end of the continuum.
- Strategy 10: Go on record incurring a debt, or as not incurring hearer, speaker can redress an FTA by explicitly claiming his indebtedness to hearer, or by disclaiming any indebtedness of hearer, by means of expressions such as for requests and for offers.

The example of negative politeness is *I suppose that Brian is with Chris*. This example shows that the speaker makes question or hedge such assumptions.

### d. Off Record

The last strategy is indirect strategy that known as off record. In this strategy, speaker says something that can be interpreted in more than one way (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 211-227). If the speaker wants to do FTA but they want to avoid responsibility for doing it, they can do off-record, and let the hearer interpret it.

- Strategy 1: Give hints, if speaker says something that is not explicitly relevant, he invites hearer to search for an interpretation of the possible relevance.
- Strategy 2: Give association clues, a related kind of implicature triggered by relevance violations is provided by mentioning something associated with the act required of hearer.
- Strategy 3: Presuppose, an utterance can be almost wholly relevant in context, and yet violate the Relevance Maxim just at the level of presuppositions.

- Strategy 4: Understate, speaker understates what he actually wants to say, but avoids the lower points of the scalar predicate.
- Strategy 5: Overstate, speaker exaggerates or chooses a point on a scale, which is higher than the real situation.
- Strategy 6: Use tautologies, speaker encourages hearer to look for an informative understanding of the non-informative utterance.
- Strategy 7: Use contradictions, by stating two things that contradict each other, speaker shows that he cannot be telling the truth and encourages hearer to look for an interpretation that reconciles the two contradictory things.
- Strategy 8: Be ironic, by saying the opposite of what he means, speaker can indirectly express intended meaning.
- Strategy 9: Use metaphors, there is a possibility for the use of metaphor by off record, which is marked with hedging particles.
- Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions, speaker asks a question with no intention of obtaining an answer; it may be used to do FTA.
- Strategy 11: Be ambiguous, Speaker achieves a purposeful ambiguity through metaphor.
- Strategy 12: Be vague, speaker goes off record with an FTA by being vague about who the object of the FTA is, or what the offense is.
- Strategy 13: Overgeneralize, speaker utters a rule instantiation which may leave the object of the FTA vaguely off record. Hearer then has the choice of deciding whether the general rule applies to him.
- Strategy 14: Displace hearer, speaker goes off record as to whom the target for his FTA is, or he may pretend to address the FTA to someone whom it wouldn't threaten and hope the real target will see that FTA is meant at him.
- Strategy 15: Be incomplete, use ellipsis, Speaker purposely does not finish his utterance and leave an FTA half undone, thus leaves the implicature 'hanging in the air'.

The example of off record is *It's really hot in here and I'm getting thirsty*. This example shows that the speaker gives hints to give them drink and turn on the air conditioner.

In this paper, the researcher will focus on some utterances that contain politeness strategies in Brooklyn Nine-Nine. There are some interesting utterances that can be analysed in this series, especially the dialogue between the main character, Jake Peralta, with the side characters. Therefore, the researcher wants to analyse Brooklyn Nine-Nine using the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987).

## RESEARCH METHOD

Ary (2010:424) stated that the qualitative inquirer deals with data that are in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers and statistics. Therefore, this research is categorized into descriptive qualitative because this research is focused on the written text (script). The subject of this research is Brooklyn Nine-Nine episode 1 season 1 and the object of this research is politeness strategies.

For collecting data, the researcher used observational method. The researcher used television series to find out some utterances that contain politeness strategies then categorize them the sub-strategies of politeness strategies.

The researchers download the data 'Brooklyn Nine-Nine' from the internet. Then, download the transcript subtitle on podnapisi.net. Finally yet importantly, classifying the utterances of the series that contain politeness strategies.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The table below shows the summary of total politeness strategies used by the characters of Brooklyn Nine-Nine.

Table 1 Politeness Strategies used by the characters of Brooklyn Nine-Nine episode 1 season 1

Politeness Strategies	Percentage (%)
Bald on-record	29.5
Positive politeness	29.5
Negative politeness	17.6
Off record	23.4
Total	100

According to the findings, there are four politeness strategies used by the characters of Brooklyn Nine-Nine. The most politeness strategies that are used by the characters are positive politeness and bald on-record. They used positive politeness because they have known each other since they are colleagues. Moreover, we can see in the result that the least politeness strategies used by the characters is negative politeness.

### Discussion

This part presents the discussion of the study. The study is about Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies applied by the characters of television series Brooklyn Nine-Nine.

#### 1. Bald on-record

Bald on-record strategy is the least polite strategy that usually used by the speaker to shock or embarrasses the hearer. The bald on-record strategy often used in Brooklyn Nine-Nine. Below are some utterances in Brooklyn Nine-Nine that categorized into bald-on record:

- (1) Jake Peralta: Don't walk away from me!
- (2) Rosa Diaz: Listen, you're a bad judge of character and your shirt looks like vomit.
- (3) Jake Peralta: I'll take that action. Police, open up!
- (4) Jake Peralta: No, Ratko, shut up.
- (5) Jake Peralta: Look, I'm not doing this with you right here.

From the findings, we can see that the utterances are direct and some of them used 'rude' expression such as 'shut up'. In sentence (1), (2), (4), and (5), we can see that the utterances



show a great desperation and urgency. Meanwhile, sentence (3) shows an offer, where the speaker may insist that hearer may impose on speaker's face.

## 2. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a strategy that usually used to praise in order to satisfy the hearer. This strategy is the most frequently strategy used in Brooklyn Nine-Nine. Below are some utterances in Brooklyn Nine-Nine that categorized into positive politeness:

- (1) Rosa Diaz: a computer, a watch, and a Jamón Ibérico ham, valued at... What? \$6,000.  
Jake Peralta: \$6.000 for a ham?
- (2) Jake Peralta: This is fantastic (referring to Captain Holt that come to the murder case)
- (3) Amy Santiago: Hey, what are you doing, weirdo?
- (4) Jake Peralta Oldie gunk. Could be. Yeah. Anyone else?
- (5) Rosa Diaz: Just to be safe? What does that mean?  
Charles Boyle: I don't know. Uh, I didn't wanna mess up,

From the utterances analysis, we can see that in sentence (1), is strategy 5, which is seeking for agreement, since the speaker doing the repetition to satisfy the hearer. Sentence (2) refers to strategy 7 specifically in the sub-strategy of strategy 7, which is the use of pronoun where the referent hasn't been made. Sentence (3) and (4) are strategy 4 because the speaker used in-group identity markers. Last, sentence (5) is strategy 6 avoid disagreement. It shows that the speaker hide disagreement by choose to be vague on his opinion.

## 3. Negative Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that negative politeness intends to create distance between speaker and hearer to show respect. Below are some utterances in Brooklyn Nine-Nine that categorized into negative politeness:

- (1) Jake Peralta: So, Santiago, would you do the honors?
- (2) Amy Santiago: I'd like to apologize for my partner
- (3) Jake Peralta: I was gonna ask you if I doing too much manscaping, but we solved that one.

From the data, it is shown that negative politeness is the least polite strategy used by the characters of Brooklyn Nine-Nine. In sentence (1), the speaker used strategy 1, be conventionally indirect because the desire to give hearer an 'out' by being indirect. Sentence (2) is strategy 6, which is apologize. Sentence (3) is strategy 3, be pessimistic. The speaker gives reader redress to hearer's negative face and explicitly expressing doubt.

## 4. Off Record

Off record is an indirect strategy. It can be interpreted more than one meaning. Below are some utterances in Brooklyn Nine-Nine that categorized into negative politeness:

- (1) Sergeant Terry: Oh. I'm fine. I'm fine. (i.e. I'm not fine!)
- (2) Charles Boyle: I just happened to notice that there is an old movie festival playing at the Film Form this week. (i.e. I want to watch movie together with you)
- (3) Stranger: I'm actually... I'm super glad that you guys are here right now (i.e. no, I'm not happy please go to somewhere)
- (4) Stranger: Cause a dude broke in, smoked weed, and bottled. It's...

In sentence (1), the speaker gives hints to the hearer. Therefore, the sentence (1) is categorized into strategy 1. Sentence (2) and (3) is strategy 2, give association clues. And the last sentence, is categorized into strategy 15, be incomplete, use ellipsis. It is because the speaker does not finish the utterance and leave the FTA undone.

## CONCLUSION

There are four kinds of politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson (1987), those are bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off road. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that Jake Peralta, the main character of Brooklyn Nine-Nine, mainly used bald on-record. Meanwhile, the other characters used positive politeness. From here, we can see that negative politeness rarely used by the characters of Brooklyn Nine-Nine since the characters have known each other and they do not create distance between themselves.

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