



## PRAGMATIC AND STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH FILM DIALOGUES

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**Annotation:** *This article examines politeness strategies in English film dialogue. The movie of this article is Nanny McPhee (Jones, 2005). The key to maintaining good relationships and reducing conflict is politeness. The study uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, which identifies five strategies: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and avoiding face-threatening acts. A qualitative descriptive method was used to analyze dialogues between the main characters and the children.*

**Key words:** *politeness strategies, bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, qualitative descriptive method,*

### INTRODUCTION

Language carries profound power not only for information exchange but also for maintaining social equality. For this reason, pragmatics and stylistics are crucial in communication. Pragmatics investigates how meaning is constructed in context (Yule, 1996), while stylistics explores how linguistic choices produce aesthetic and expressive effects. One of the issues in pragmatic research is politeness.

Politeness has a great role in preserving interpersonal relationships and mitigating conflict in communication. It is a “polite social behaviour” within a certain culture (Yule, 1998: 60). The stereotype also makes people think that being polite means keeping distance, being dishonest, and being unfeeling

between the speaker and the hearer (Watts, 2003: 2). Generally, being polite involves taking into consideration the feelings of others and demonstrating awareness of their face needs. When individuals feel respected and comfortable in interaction, harmonious relationships are more likely to develop (Mifta, 2013). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), speakers employ politeness strategies to protect their own and others’ “face,” or public self-image.

Analyzing film dialogues with the help of politeness strategies is essential because they are the main form of real interaction among people. On top of that, through pragmatic and stylistic analysis, we can observe how linguistic forms



reflect social interaction and character roles.

This article aims to conduct a pragmatic and stylistic analysis of politeness strategies in English film dialogues with the help of the Nanny McPhee movie. This movie is categorized as a family comedy film and was awarded Woman Film Critics Circle in the category of Best Live Action Family Film. It tells about a widower, Cedric Brown, who has very naughty children. Being busy with his work, he hires a nanny to help him look after his children. The children are ill-mannered and they manage to get rid of seventeen nannies until Nanny McPhee comes. With her magical power, she teaches them to be polite and well-behaved such as saying please and listening to their elders (Mifta, 2013).

The model of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is based upon the concept of "face", influenced by the term 'face' as used by Goffman (1967). Each of us has 'face' which is "the public self-image" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). This face needs to be maintained, in the form of both positive face and negative face. The former is affected when a person feels that he is liked or respected, while the latter arises when a person feels that he is forced into doing something against his will or when he feels there is disrespect. In every culture, people have similar face needs, and interlocutors in a successful communication will often consciously

choose to respect each other's face so as not cause any unnecessary disharmony in a relationship.(Yanti 2017)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) there are five main strategies of politeness. They are bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record -this strategy allow speakers to speak indirectly and let the people enter the meaning (Yanti, 2017), -avoiding the FTA. When it comes to bald on record, it is using clear and direct statements without mitigation, as we can see from the name, positive politeness expresses friendliness, offering compliments, jokes. In contrast, negative politeness uses more formal language and apologies, showing respect for autonomy. Leech (2007) notes that these strategies are widely used across cultures to maintain politeness and protect face.

This article is based on a qualitative descriptive study. The data of the research were dialogues between the main characters and the children in which utterances containing politeness strategies were used by the main characters in the movie were found.

Types of Politeness Strategies Employed by the Main Characters in Nanny McPhee Movie.

Bald-on Record. Mifta Hasmi (2023) explains that Bald-on record strategy is commonly found in people who know each other very well and very comfortable in their environment, such as between close friends and families (. Since Nanny McPhee movie is a family movie, this type of strategy emerges in a



large number in the second position. The main characters, who are the father (Cedric Brown) and the nanny (Nanny McPhee) of the Browns' family, know the children very well because they often have interactions with them. Example for bald on record strategy: Sebastian : "Before supper?" Cedric Brown : "Without supper." In this example we can see that they speak directly without showing any politeness. Next example for this strategy is that Simon : "Come on, whoever you are! Let's stop this and go to bed!" Nanny McPhee : "Say "please"." Simon : "I never say "please"." cedric brown's Simon communicate with Nanny McPhee in direct tone. According to movie admitting Simon's stubbornness, Nanny uses 49 an imperative form to directly ask all children to say please, without attempting to minimize the threat.

As indicated by Myers (1989), research writers use several strategies to show positive politeness such as strategic use of modifiers assuming common ground. In the film of Nanny McPhee, there are also positive politeness strategies. Nanny McPhee says: "Norman, could you please turn that little red wheel all the way, clockwise? Right, thank you" This expresses solidarity, showing respect and closeness.

In negative politeness strategy we keep distance, respect. In the movie it is described by different dialogues, one of them is that Nanny McPhee says: "Hello, Simon. Can I help you?" it is considered indirect and respectful, maintaining

listener's freedom. Another example of politeness, especially apologizing, can be seen in a scene when Nanny McPhee enters the children's bedroom to wake them up. Children do not want to get up and they say that they are ill. They act like they have something on their faces, they wear dresses because they want to make their look convincing. Here is conversation: Eric : "[coughs] We can't get up. We're ill." Chrissie : "Colds in our doses. Sebastian : "And kemperakurk." Simon : "We think it might be the measles." Aggy : "Got measig." Nanny McPhee : "Good heavens. Then there is of course no question of your getting up. I'm very sorry to have to tell you all that you'll have to stay in bed." in this situation Nanny McPhee lets them be ill as they act with the help of her magic stick without any arguments, even she apologizes with using -I am very sorry- maintaining respect towards children.

Conclusion. There are 5 different types of politeness strategies-bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and apologizing- in dealing with film dialogues. They serve as an engine to communicate easily without any barriers, to interpret meaning, understand and explain the situation. These politeness strategies are commonly seen in everyday usage, real-life. However, in films we can observe them accurately and clearly. In the movie of Nanny McPhee, these strategies are obvious. Brown and Levinson(1987) explain correctly them in communication and conversations. We



can observe that bald on record strategy is popular among people who know each other very well, because they can speak openly, more directly without any fear. In

this film, children use more this strategy because they know each other well.

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