

# THE ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGY IN REQUESTS USED BY THE CHARACTERS IN A FILM ENTITLED *SYDNEY WHITE* AND ITS APPLICATION IN TEACHING SPEAKING

Nur'aini Ratri Oktaviani

Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo, Jln. K.H.A. Dahlan Purworejo 54111,  
Purworejo, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: [nuraini97ratri@gmail.com](mailto:nuraini97ratri@gmail.com)

## Abstract

This research deals with politeness strategy in requests used by the characters in the film entitled *Sydney White* and its application in teaching speaking at Junior High School. The aims of this research are (1) to analyse the types of request expressions as politeness strategies found in *Sydney White* film; (2) to describe the application of request expressions as politeness strategies used by the characters in teaching speaking at Junior High School. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The data are in the form of utterances containing request expressions as politeness strategies found in *Sydney White* film based on the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) about politeness strategies and the theory of Tsui (2017) about requests. The result of this analysis shows there are five types of request expressions found in *Sydney White* film. Those are request for action 7 data (43.75%), request for permission 5 data (31.25%), offer 2 data (12.5%), and invitation and proposal 1 data (6.25%). There are three politeness strategies used by the characters to express their requests, those are bald on record 4 data, positive politeness 9 data and negative politeness 3 data from 16 expressions. This research can be applied in teaching speaking at Junior High School and may become the reference for other study.

**Keywords:** *Politeness strategy, request, film, teaching speaking.*

## INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important aspects in human daily life. It is used to communicate with other people. Then, the communication without language is impossible to be happening, and the language cannot stand itself. Language needs to be used to communicate each other. Communication is divided into verbal and non-verbal. In verbal communication there are speaker and hearer as the communicator. The speaker will choose ways to speak politely to the hearer. Usually, when someone request for something or permission to do something must be in a polite way to the hearer.

Politeness is commonly interpreted as the practical application of good manners develops relationship. It is used to keep the relationship among others in order to make the condition better. Politeness is needed when talking to others, especially in request. The request is a type of speech act which is generally carried out in daily conversation. This type of speech act focuses on asking someone to do something,

which is given the choice to do something or not. The request can be divided into request for permissions, offers, request for action, and invitation.

The request is basically the negotiation of the speaker to hearer who is done face to face. This can sometimes trigger a threat to their conversation. To minimize the threat, it can use politeness strategy such as bald on request, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record. Politeness can be used in requests as communication strategies used by the speaker to reduce losses and maintain good relationship between communication participants.

Request can be found in daily conversation but also in a film. Conversations in films can be identified through dialogue between characters and it can be applied in daily conversations to practice speaking skills.

One of the big enthusiasms to do speaking practice is by watching films. When people watching films, they will give their big attention to the films. *Sydney White* film is one of the American teen film chosen as the material to analysis for this research, because this film is a teenage romantic comedy that tells about the life of the student in campus and the languages used in conversations between characters is easy to understand.

By analyzing requests expression in each conversation from this film, then, the results of the analysis were applied in teaching speaking. In this context, Junior High School is the goal to be applied for this result.

In conducting the research, the writer took theories which are used as a foundation to run the research in sequence. Those theories are related to politeness strategy, requests and teaching speaking. The details of the literature are as follows.

### ***Politeness Strategy***

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearer's face because certain act are liable to damage or threaten another person face. He proposed four main types of politeness strategies: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record.

#### **a) Bald on-Record**

This kind of strategy provides no attempt to minimize the damage to the hearer's face. Using bald on-record strategy will shock and make the hearers feel a bit uncomfortable. This strategy is mostly used in situation where the speaker has close relationship with the hearer, such as family or close friend.

Moreover, this strategy will be used when there is an obvious power differential between the participants, where the speaker occupies higher position than the hearer. Sub-strategies of bald on-record are:

##### **1) Case of non-minimization of the face threats**

It happens in the condition where maximum efficiency is very important, and this is mutually known to both speaker and hearer that no face redresses is necessary.

2) Case of Face-threatening act (FTA) oriented bald on-record usage

It is polite for the speaker to reduce hearer's anxieties by preemptively inviting hearer to impinge on the speaker's preserve.

b) Positive politeness

In this strategy, the threat to face is relatively low. The use of strategies designed to redress the addressee's positive face wants. The speaker indicates that in general they want to maintain some of hearer's positive face wants, by for example, treating the hearer as a member of the same group or by expressing liking for the hearer's personality. The expression of positive politeness as a motive strategy of face threat redress is marked by exaggeration. Some kind of positive politeness strategies are below. Sub-strategies of Positive Politeness:

- 1) Noticing, attending to the hearer (her/his interests, wants, needs, good, etc.) Example: ***Jim, you're really good at solving computer problem.*** I wonder if you could just help me with a little formatting problem I've got.
- 2) Exaggerating (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer). Example: ***Good old Jim. Just the man I wanted to see. I knew I'd find you here.*** Could you spare me a couple of minute?
- 3) Intensifying interest to hearer. Example: ***you'll never guess what Fred told me last night. This is right your street.***
- 4) Using in-group identity markers in speech. Example: Here's my old mate Fred. How are you doing today, ***mate?*** Could you give me a hand to get this car to start?

c) Negative politeness

Negative politeness focuses on minimizing the imposition by attempting to soften it. In this strategy, the threat to face is relatively high. The use of strategies designed to redress the addressee's negative face wants. The speaker indicates respect for the hearer's face wants and wish not to interfere with the hearer's freedom action.

The sub-strategies of negative politeness are below.

- 1) Being indirect. Example: ***Could you tell me time,*** please?
  - 2) Minimizing the imposition. Example: Could I talk to you ***for just a minute?***
  - 3) Apologizing. Example: ***Sorry to bother you,*** but.....
- d) Off record

Off record is likely to be called as indirect strategy. Off record covers the act of employing indirectness. The speakers say something that is actually different from what they literary say. The indirect utterance is intended to be understood by the hearer an attempt to minimize the threat on the hearer's face. Some sub-strategies of this strategy are:

- a) Give hints: ***"It is hot here"***.

- b) Be sarcastic or joking: *"Yeah, he is real rocket scientist".*
- c) Use metaphors: *"Harry is a real fish".*

## 1. Requests

Request is speech act that prospects the non-verbal action. It is intended by the speaker to make hearer do something. According to Tsui (2017), request can be classified into five types. They are request for action, request for permission, offer, invitation, and proposal.

### a) Request for action

Request for action is a request that commit the hearer to do non-verbal action as the response of the utterance delivered by the speaker. It is intended for the benefit of the speaker.

For example:

*Lenny : "Can you help me?"*

*Sydney : "Sure"*

### b) Request for permission

Request for permission is used by the speaker to ask permission for doing something. It intends for the benefit of the speaker and involves the speaker's performance in the future action. If the hearer gives positive response, the speaker will convey non-verbal response.

For example:

*Daughter : "There will be Justin music concert in SCC the night. May I go out to watch it Mom?"*

*Mother : "Surely, but don't be late to go home"*

### c) Offer

Offer is request that is used by the speaker to offer something to be accepted by the hearer. In other words, the speaker requests the hearer to accept his offer. It typically provides the benefit for the hearer. For example:

*Lenny : "This room is so dirty. Do you want me to clean it?"*

*Sydney : "Oh, thank you Lenny. You are so kind."*

### d) Invitation

Invitation is a request that is used by the speaker to ask the hearer to go or come somewhere. The non-verbal response is performed by the hearer and it is intended for the benefit of the hearer. In this case, the hearer gets a chance to accept or refuse the invitation.

For example:

*Tyler : "He's like a kid who just found out there's no Santa Claus."*

*Sydney : "What?"*

*Tyler : "I mean, you know if there weren't a Santa Claus which, of course there is. You guys should come hang out sometime. Bring Gurkin of Honor. You know, actually we're having a party tomorrow night. You guys wanna come?"*

### e) Proposal

Proposal is request of suggestion in which the speaker asks the hearer to do something for the benefit of both speaker and hearer. The non-verbal action as the response of the request will be performed by the speaker and the

hearer. Compared to request of offer, request of proposal is not likely to be followed by thanking expression.

For example:

A: *"Why don't we try to do this homework by ourselves? We don't need to ask their help because it will make us be lazy."*

B: *"You're right guys. Let's do it now!"*

## **METHOD**

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The data are in the form of utterances containing request expressions as politeness strategies found in *Sydney White* film based on the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) about politeness strategies and the theory of Tsui (2017) about requests.

The writer used analysis of audio-visual materials because use the scene of film to collect the data and the researcher also use documents by note-taking to collect the data in this research. The steps in collecting the data were watching *Sydney White* film carefully, reading the movie script, analysing the utterances that are related to request expressions as politeness strategies, and giving code of each data. In analyzing the data, the step were classifying the types of request expressions as politeness strategies, describing and discussing the requests as politeness strategies, applying the finding of request expressions as politeness strategies and drawing the conclusion based on the analyzed.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

From the analysis, the writer got the findings there are five types of request expression used by the characters in the film entitled *Sydney White*. They are request for action, request for permission, offer, invitation and proposal. Moreover, request for action is the most found in the film. The data is 7 (43.75%) out of 16 expressions. The second mostly found in the film is request for permission has 5 (31.25%) out of 16 expressions. There are 2 data (12.5%) of offer. Then, followed by invitation and proposal has the same data, it has 1 data (6.25%).

Based on the data, the researcher found that there are four politeness strategies used by the characters in *Sydney White* film to express their requests. The strategies mostly used by the characters in expressing their request are positive politeness. There are 9 out of 16 expressions used by the characters. The second strategies is bald on record in expressing their request, there are 4 out of 16 expressions used by the characters. Negative politeness found 3 out of 16 expressions used by the characters to express their request. While off record is not found in this data.

1. Request for action

7/RFA/NP/Gi/ 01:42:13–01:42:23

Girls : “*Hey, we are from Southeast State and we’re lost. Can you help us?*”

Spankly : “*I’ll be your guide.*”

From the bold utterance uttered by the girls, it was found that they used request for action. The perspective action was going by Spankly as the hearer, and the benefit of the request was intended for the girls. The girl used negative politeness strategy to express their request because they uttered the request in indirect sentence. The girls chose negative politeness strategy in uttering their request because there was a social distance between them. They were a boy and girls who had not known each other well because they had just met for the first time.

2. Request for permission

5/RFP/BOR/S/01:42:22–01:42:29

Spankly : “*I’ll be your guide. Give me five minutes.*”

Girls : “*Take all the time you need.*”

From the bold utterance uttered by Spankly, it was found that he used request for permission. The perspective action of this request was done by Spankly as the speaker for his own benefit. Spankly used bald on record to express his request because he said his request in high tone by employing imperative sentence. Besides, Spankly baldy uttered his request because there was a time limitation that made him speak efficiently.

3. Offer

2/O/PP/L/00:42:38–00:43:01

Lenny : “*Did they really make you sing Céline Dion?*”

Sydney : “*Yeah...*”

Lenny : “*Do you need a place to stay?*”

From the bold utterance was categorized into offer. Because, the action prospected by the speaker’s request utterance would be carried out by the speaker or the hearer’s benefit. In expressing his request, Lenny used positive politeness strategy especially attended the hearer’s need. Besides, by expressing such friendliness, Lenny attempted to minimize the social distance between them.

4. Invitation

1/I/PP/T/01:15:11–01:15:34

Sydney : *“He is like a kid who just found there is no Santa Clause. I mean, hypothetically you know if there were no Santa clause.”*

Tyler : *“You guys should hang out sometimes. Bring Gurkin of Honor. You know, actually we having a party tomorrow night. **You guys wanna come?**”*

From the bold utterance, it was found that Tyler used invitation. Tyler request Sydney’s friend for attended the party on the next day, it was mean Tyler asked them to come somewhere. The perspective action of request delivered by Tyler was carried out by Sydney’s friends for their own benefit. In uttering his request, Tyler used positive politeness strategy especially applied in group identity marker that was realized by the use of the word ‘guys’ to call Sydney’s friend. In this case, the involvement of address form could be used to soften the request. By calling Sydney’s friends with that word, Tyler wanted to show that he recognized them as friends.

5. Proposal

1/P/PP/SW/00:04:40–00:04:45

Father : *“Girl, you are gonna fit into that place like an overflow tube in a pressure tank.”*

Sydney: *“**C’mom Dad, we no mushy stuff.**”*

Father : *“Right, no mushy stuff.”*

The bold sentence uttered by Sydney showed that she used request expression. This kind of request expression was categorized into proposal. Based on the context, Sydney’s utterance was intended to be carried out by herself and her father for their benefit.

In uttering her request to her father, Sydney used positive politeness strategy, because she had close relationship with her father. Having good relationship made Sydney and her father had known each other fairly well. Father was someone who was personally respected and loved by Sydney because he was the only parent she had after her mother died.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research finding and discussion, the writer makes conclusion that can be described as follows.

1. There are five types of request expressions found in *Sydney White* film. They are namely request for action, request for permission, offer, invitation and proposal.
2. Three politeness strategies were used in request expressions employed by the characters, namely, bald on record strategy, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategy.
3. This study can be applied in the teaching speaking at the VIII grade of Junior High School in the materials Giving and Responding to Instructions, Invitation and request for permission on syllabus of k13 in basic competence 3.3. It is closely related with types of request expression in politeness strategy. Teacher can use utterances contain request expressions in the film *Sydney White* in teaching speaking.

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