Negative Politeness Strategies of Main Characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" Movie to Teach Pragmatics

Putridyah Anggraini[1*], Fitri Yulianti[2], Sri Wahyuni[3]

[1]English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

[2]English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

[3]English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

*putridyah309@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the negative politeness strategies and to find out the most dominant negative politeness strategies are used of main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie. The study used descriptive qualitative method and the analysis data is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory. The result shows that there are six types of negative politeness strategies are used by two main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie. Be conventionally indirect with five data, question, hedge with eight data, be pessimistic with one data, minimize the imposition with two data, give deference with two data, and apologize with three data. The most dominant negative politeness strategies of main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie is question, hedge with eight utterances. Pragmatics is the ability to use language socially and adapt it in a certain situation. It is essential for participating in socially acceptable conversations and interactions. Negative politeness in pragmatics relates with the study of how people use language while they interact or communicate. It helps people to make a polite conversation in order to maintain a good personal relationships.

Keywords: negative politeness, main characters, movie, pragmatics

Introduction

To avoid misunderstanding between speakers and hearers, people need to understand the true meaning behind the words that have been spoken by the participants who involved in the conversation. People must know what, when and to whom they should say in order to communicate effectively. In interactions, people have different ways, attitudes, and strategies to speak with others. It depends on their background cultures, speech context, and the situation. The study of pragmatics is required because a lack of understanding of pragmatics can have an impact on a person's daily social skills and interactions. According to (Yule, 2010), pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning conveyed by a speaker and interpreted by a hearer. If one of the participants in the conversation has pragmatics impairment, the hearer will have difficulty to understand the message and may be hesitant to participate in the conversation at all. Morover, people have to use politeness when interacting with others in order to respect and maintain a good relationships.

Teaching pragmatics has important roles in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class because pragmatics is a set of skills that enables people to know what to say and how to communicate in a certain situation. Based on the writer's experience in pragmatics learning activity there are still many students who do not fully comprehend the concept of pragmatics and its application particularly in terms of politeness strategies. (Brown et al., 1987) concluded that in order to participate in social relationships, people must recognize the faces of the others. Face can be defined as a person's public self-image. In this time, people are interested in learning languages through movies. Generally, people watch a movie to study about vocabulary, pronounciation, characters, and so on. But, some people do not know that through a movie they can learn about contextual meaning which is reflected in the dialogue especially in the English movie. There are many aspects that can be learned from the movies with the aim to develop a good relationships with others such as politeness strategies. Politeness strategies are important subject matter in pragmatics. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are four politeness strategies such as bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record.

As an object of this research, movie is a good media for people who want to increase their knowledge about language especially about politeness. In this study, the writers focus to analyze negative politeness strategies of main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie because the negative politeness is one of the topics that rarely to discuss. Through this study, the writers hope that can facilitate as an additional references to enrich information and knowledge about negative politeness strategies with the aim that people can make a polite conversation in order to maintain a good personal relationships.

Based on the explanation above, there are two research questions that writers want to answer:

1. What types of negative politeness strategies are used in main characters of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie?
2. What is the most dominant negative politeness strategies found in main characters of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie?

Literature Review

In this part, the writers present a review of the related literature to this study. Many sources such as journals and books provide definitions, descriptions and example of the theory.

The word politeness has several meanings. The concept of politeness have been proposed by many lingusts. According to (Holmes, 2013) speaking politely entails helping to maintain social harmony and avoiding social conflict. (Cruse, 2000) also states that politeness is mostly a function of what is spoken rather than what is thought or believed. (Yule, 2010) explains that politeness is described as paying attention to and considering the another person's face. Based on the definition above, politeness in a communication can be defined as the concept of maintaining a good relationships by avoiding the interlocutor feeling threatened, offended or even imposed.

The writer uses Brown and Levinson's theory as the main theory of this study because theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) is undoubtedly the most influential and widely tested theories in the field of pragmatics politeness studies. In pragmatics terms, face means as a self-image. Every person wants to claim for himself and to be recognize by

everyone else. Face can be divided into two types which are negative and positive face. The negative face is the desire to be independent and free of imposition whereas the positive face is the desire to be connected and to be part of a group.

A face threatening act (FTA) occurs when the speaker says anything that threatens another person's self-image while face saving act occurs when the speaker says something that reduces the potential threat to another's face. In the writer point of view, negative face does not always mean something bad, but this face has to be independent not forced by others and to have freedom of a action. Therefore, it is assumed that there are social barriers in a communication.

Many research have been conducted related to the study of pragmatics, especially in politeness strategies topic. It begins with the study from (Ernovilinda, 2020) analyzed the main characters with the aim to find out the types of politeness strategy are used in the "Shanghai Knights" film. She employed qualitative descriptive method. The result of this research showed that there are politenes strategies and the most dominant of politeness strategies is bald on record.

(Suyono et al., 2021) investigated the types of negative politeness strategies and the reasons of choosing those strategies in "What Would You Do?" TV show. In their study, they applied a descriptive qualitative method. The result of this research showed that there are seven negative politeness strategies are used by the participants in the TV show which are be indirect, questions, hedges, minimize the imposition, apologize, give deference, be pessimistic, and state the FTA as general rule.

(Fatimah & Simanjuntak, 2021) analyzed the politeness strategies in the four main characters in sitcom "Tetangga Masa Gitu" They used theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) to figure out the politeness strategies. In their study, they employed qualitative method. The result of this research showed that there are several politeness strategies such as bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record that used by each couple in the sitcom.

(Fitria et al., 2020) examined the research about politeness strategies on the main character of "Bridge To Terabithia" movie. The data analysis are taken from the script of the movie. She used Brown and Levinson's theory as a main theory and the method of this research is qualitative. She found that the most dominant strategies is bald on record and positive politeness.

Method

The object of this study is movie entitled "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)". This study used a qualitative method. According to (Ary et al., 2010) qualitative research focuses on the entire picture rather than breaking it down into variables and numerically analyzing it. This study focused on the analysis and interpretation of the material in context. It is focused to analyze the negative politeness strategies and to find out the most dominant negative politeness strategies used by main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie.

To collect the data, the writers used documentation method. According to (Creswell, 2012) a documentary is a data collection technique based on public documents such as transcripts, books, newspaper, magazines, or private documents such as personal journals, diaries, and letters. The writers in collecting the data took some steps. First, watching the movie of "My

Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" more than once. Second, searching and reading the movie script. Third, identifying the dialogue that contains of negative politeness strategies are used by main characters in the movie. And the last, classifying the utterances of negative politeness and the data analysis could be arranged in the table to make clear.

The data analysis is based on Brown and Levinson theory and to support this study, the writers use the internet to get more information such as book, journal, script and the movie. (Ary et al., 2010) described three simple stages for qualitative data analysis which are familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, interpreting and representing.

1. Familiarizing and Organizing
   The first step in analyzing qualitative data the writers must be familiar and organize the data, so that it can be quickly retrieved. To begin, the writers should read and reread notes and transcripts, watch and review videotapes or the movie repeatedly.
2. Coding and Reducing
   After familiarizing and organizing the data, the writers started the coding and reducing process. The writers code the data after defining and categorizing the types of negative politeness strategies found in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie.
3. Interpreting and Representing
   Bringing out the meaning, telling the story, giving an explanation and coming up with credible answers are all part of interpretation. The writers interpret the meaning of the utterances used in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie by describing and explaining the data in order to answer the research problem.

Finding and Discussion

Based on Brown and Levinson theory of politeness strategies, negative politeness is oriented toward the hearer's negative faces and emphasize avoiding the speaker's distraction. The main purpose of this strategy is that the speaker does not disturb the comfort of the interlocutor. However, this strategy will show a little distance between the speaker and the hearer or they seem to be in an awkward situation. It is assumed that there are some social barriers in the situation.

There are ten sub strategies of negative politeness, they are strategy 1 be conventionally indirect, strategy 2 question hedge, strategy 3 be pessimistic, strategy 4 minimize the imposition, strategy 5 give deference, strategy 6 apologize, strategy 7 impersonalize S and H, strategy 8 state the FTA as a general rule, strategy 9 nominalize, and strategy 10 go on record as incuring a debt or as not indebting H. But not all sub strategies are used in the script of two main characters. The writers found six types of negative politeness strategies that used by two main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie. Each of them is discussed as follow:

Strategy 1 Be Conventionally Indirect

The speaker in this strategy express his desire to the hearer indirectly and go on record. This employs phrases and sentences which have an unambiguous contextual meaning that is different from their literal meaning.

Data 1:

Toula   : I'm not leaving you. Don't you want me to do something with my life?

Gus : Yes! Get married! Make babies! You look so old!

When Toula asked, "Don't you want to do something with my life?" She wanted that her father would allow her to attend college and take some courses in the hope that her life would be changed. It is conventionally indirect because the speaker does not express her true intention, but she gives space for the hearer to answer the question and do something. Furthermore, by felicity conditions it is indicated that H will do A.

Data 2:

Toula   : This is good, actually. Can you stop?

Ian : Sure.

Toula asked Ian to stop the car near the house after dinner, so Toula's father wouldn't find out. Toula prefers to say "Can you stop?" instead of "I want you to stop." It indicates that the speaker is making an indirect request to the hearer.

Data 3:

Toula   : Ma, the band needs to be picked up at the airport.

She wants someone to pick up the band, but she does not want to express her true intentions directly by saying, "Go to the airport and pick up the band." Even though the utterance goes on record, the speaker wants to convey her desire to be indirect.

Data 4:

Toula   : Hold again, please. Hi, British Airways.

The dialogue above happened when Toula started working at the travel agency and she was having a good time. Toula was on the phone with a customer. It can be seen that Toula softened her direct expression by using the conventionally polite expression "please."

Data 5:

Ian   Okay, may I please date your daughter?

Gus : No!

It can be seen that Ian used a negative politeness by being conventionally indirect. Ian clearly wants to date Toula by asking Gus's willingness. In short, the speaker attempts to be as negatively polite as possible. He made a polite request to Toula's father.

Strategy 2 Question, Hedge

A hedge is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set. Hedging words and phrases are used to soften a word, make them less direct and limit or qualify assertions and declarations. This strategy is accomplished by not assuming that the hearer wants or accept the FTA. In other words, the hedge is a strategy in which the speaker attempts to show reluctance while delivering their utterances in order to minimize the FTA.

Data 6:

Toula   : So, if you want, I could go to college and take a few courses.

The utterance is classified as negative politeness because the word "If" is adverbial-clause hedge and the addressee will not mind doing it. The use of "If" can also be interpreted as a softener command.

Data 7:

Toula   : I think it takes a pretty strong person to do that.

Ian : well, you know everything about me.

Toula's sentences can be seen as an expression of appreciation or respect for Ian who dared to take a different path than his family members. Toula used hedge as a strategy to make him feel good.

Data 8:

Gus : Toula, there are two kinds of people, Greeks and everybody else who wish they were Greek.

Toula   : Okay, Yes, we know.

Toula was annoyed by those words and walked away, saying "Okay, yes, we know." Toula's feelings are expressed by the hedging "Okay." The use of "Okay" in casual speech appears to soften commands.

Data 9:

Toula   : Thia, that might be problem.

Voula   : Problem? I'm best cook in the family.

Toula's utterances can be classified as a negative politeness strategies and the word "might" expresses the speaker's hedging expression to the hearer in order to soften presumptuous statements. In some cases, it appears that this simply converts a statement into a question.

Data 10:

Toula   : And I'm greek, right?

Ian : Right.

Ian began talking about his family where he was the only child. This is in contrast to Toula who was born into a large family. Toula's sentences with the word "right" indicates that Toula intended Ian to agree with her statement.

Data 11:

Ian : No, listen. I know this is really great place, you probably know it.

Toula   : I don't wanna go there.

Ian asked Toula if she wanted to go to a Greek restaurant for dinner. Toula refused to go to Dancing Zorba because it is her family's restaurant. Ian's utterances is reffered to as a hedge because the word "probably" functions as an adverb and as a strengthener that mainly act as emphatic hedges. It is used to ask question with the hearer.

Data 12:

Ian : I can't ask you to be my best man, although, technically, you are.

Mike   : You were gonna ask me to be your best man?

As an adverb, the word "technically" serve as a strengthener. It is used to ask a question to the hearer. Its purpose is to emphasize what Ian meant and to satisfy Mike's desires. It can transform a statement into a question, request, or invitation.

Data 13:

Ian : I guess, now you can have this.

The phrase "I guess" indicates that the speaker attempted to be less direct, more polite and to minimize the threat that occured after giving the command. In some cases, this seems simply to turn a statement into a question.

Strategy 3 Be Pessimistic

In this strategy, the speaker expresses his pessimism about how he or she feels or thinks and avoids being direct with the interlocutor. This can be accomplished by indicating that the hearer has the option not to do the act. In other words, being pessimistic is a strategy in which the speaker expresses explicit doubt toward the interlocutor in order not to offend him. The speaker is pessimistic about the response of the hearer.

Data 14:

Toula   : I have no life.

Maria   : Fotoula, you talk me sometime.

Maria mentioned how Toula had closed the restaurant the night before and opened it early the next morning. Then, Toula replied "I have no life." From the Toula's sentences, it indicates that she pessimistic about her own life.

Strategy 4 Minimize the Imposition

Minimizing the imposition is a strategy in which the speaker attempts to do the FTA (Face Threatening Act) by mentioning a statement in order to maintain the interlocutor's negative face. Minimization can be accomplished by selecting a set of words that represent a matter's minimum state. The speaker inserts word such as "Just" to emphasize his or her desire not to burden or threaten the interlocutor by reducing things.

Data 15:

Toula   : I just feel like we can't get married, not like this.

Ian : Hey, I love you.

Toula expressed her feelings to Ian, saying "I just feel like we can't get married." The word "Just" is the most frequently used expression in which the speaker uses it to reduce the threat that the interlocutor faces.

Data 16:

Ian : I just want to spend some time with you. I just want to spend a little time with you.

The word "Just" conveys both its literal meaning of "exactly", "only" and it is the most commonly used expression in which the speaker applies it to reduce the threat faced by the interlocutor.

Strategy 5 Give Deference

Giving deference is the act of humbling oneself in order to satisfy the hearer's desire for respect. In this strategy, the speaker expresses respect for others through utterance. To deal with his negative face, this strategy emphasizes expressing appreciation for the interlocutor's status. The speaker employs the honorific to show his politeness and what is conveyed is that the hearer is of higher social status.

Data 17:

Toula   : Hello, Mrs. Christakis. Thanks for holding.

In Toula's utterances, she uses "Mrs" as a greeting which can be interpreted as a formal situation in which the speaker has a different social status with the interlocutor. Toula wants to satisfy the desire of the hearer to be treated as superior.

Data 18:

Ian : Mr. Portokalos, *Khristos Anesti.*

Toula requested that Ian repeat her words "*Khristos Anesti.*" Which means to "Happy Easter." Ian said to Toula's father "Mr. Portokalos, *Khristos Anesti.*" It is clear that Ian wants to satisfy Gus Portokalos's desire to be treated as superior by using the word "Mr."

Strategy 6 Apologize

By apologizing, the speaker can demonstrate his or her unwillingness to threaten or impinge on hearer's face. This strategy can be expressed by admitting the impingement, indicating reluctance, giving overwhelming reasons and begging forgiveness. In short, Apologizing is accomplished by conveying the speaker's reluctance or apology to the hearer. The deferential shows reluctance through hesitation and bubbliness.

Data 19:

Toula   : Hi. Sorry, my brain stopped. You ever have one of those days when it's going along and then stops.

Toula's words show that she said "Sorry" which means to lighten the hearer's burden because the speaker realizes what she has done is threatening the hearer's self-esteem. Furthermore, "Sorry" as an apology is a marker of these dialogs.

Data 20:

Toula   : I'm sorry I lied to you.

Toula apologized to her mother for lying about her relationshipwith Ian. She said "I'm sorry" to her mother, indicating the speaker's reluctance to impinge on the hearer's negative face and a marker of this dialogue is "I'm sorry" as an apology.

Data 21:

Ian : I'm sorry, but to ask you if I can date your daughter.

Toula's father did not believe she had been in a secret relationship with Ian without his permission. When Ian realized what had happened, he immediately apologized to Toula's father, saying, "I'm sorry." Those utterances showing the strategy of apologizing because there a marker of this dialogue is "I'm sorry" as an apology.

Table 1: Negative Politeness Strategies Data Findings

No.	Negative Politeness	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Be conventionally indirect	5	24%
2.	Question, hedge	8	38%
3.	Be pessimistic	1	5%
4.	Minimize the imposition	2	10%
5.	Give deference	2	10%
6.	Apologize	3	14%
	Total	21	100%

From the table above, the writers found the most dominant types of negative politeness strategies used by main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie which are strategy 2 question, hedge with 8 data. Strategy 1 be conventionally indirect is on the second rank with 5 data. Furthermore, there are strategies with the same frequency which are strategy 4 minimize the imposition and strategy 5 give deference with 2 data. Meanwhile, the lowest rank frequency is strategy 3 be pessimistic which only 1 data.

There are 21 utterances containing negative politeness strategies of two main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie. Negative politeness indicates that the speaker recognized the hearer's face and admits to imposing on the hearer in some way. This is aimed at softening the imposition. The findings in the main characters presented above are in line with the relevant reearch written by (Makasiahe & Suryani, 2020) entitled "Negative Politeness Strategies in "Big Hero 6" Movie." Which found that the most dominant of negative politeness strategies employed by the characters are question, hedge with 7 utterances.

Conclusion

From the analysis of main characters in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie, the writers concluded that there are negative politeness strategies found in main characters of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie which are strategy 1 be conventionally indirect with 5 utterances, strategy 2 question, hedge with 8 utterances, strategy 3 be pessimistic with 1 utterances, strategy 4 minimize the imposition with 2 utterances, strategy 5 give deference with 2 utterances, and strategy 6 apologize with 3 utterances. The most dominant types of negative politeness strategies found in main characters of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)" movie is strategy 2 question, hedge with 8 utterances.

The writers suggest that it may be useful for others who want to learn politeness strategies, especially negative politeness strategies. The next researcher who wants to conduct research on negative politeness strategies is expected to discover other types of negative politeness

strategies that were not discovered in this study. Negative politeness strategies can not be understood in a brief because they must be studied further.

References

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. K. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education* (8th ed.). Wadsworth Cengane Learning.

Brown, P., Levinson, S., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Pearson.

Cruse, D. A. (2000). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Ernovilinda, E. (2020). Politeness Strategy in Shanghai Knights Film. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, *5*(1), 39. https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v5i1.571

Fatimah, I. N., & Simanjuntak, R. R. (2021). An Analysis of Politeness Strategies in Sitcom Tetangga Masa Gitu from NET TV . *Proceedings of the 1st UMGESHIC International Seminar on Health, Social Science and Humanities (UMGESHIC-ISHSSH 2020)*, *585*, 748–752. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211020.112

Fitria, H., Ningrum, D. R., & Suhandoko, S. (2020). Politeness Strategies Reflected By the Main Character in "Bridge To Terabithia" Movie. *Etnolingual*, *4*(1), 57. https://doi.org/10.20473/etno.v4i1.20336

Holmes, J. (2013). *An Introducion to Sociolinguistics* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Makasiahe, A. K., & Suryani, M. S. (2020). *Negative Politeness Strategies i n "Big Hero 6" Movie*. *4778*, 353–361. https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v8i1.1403

Suyono, M., Andriyanti, E., & Yogyakarta, U. N. (2021). *Negative Politeness Strategies in What Would You Do ? TV Show*. *21*(2), 439–452. https://doi.org/10.24071/joll.v21i2.3430

Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.