

## **POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN *CHRISTOPHER ROBIN* (2018) FILM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research focuses on the politeness strategies used by the main characters of Christopher Robin film. The objectives of this research are to find out the politeness strategies used by the main characters of the film and to explain the motivations of the main characters of the film in using the politeness strategies. This research is a qualitative research with content analysis approach. The data sources of this research are the screenplay of Christopher Robin film and the transcript of the dialogue done in the film. The data were taken from the dialogues and utterances from the main characters containing politeness strategies. All of the main characters of the film used politeness strategies. However, not all of the main characters used all of the types of politeness strategies. Christopher was the one who used the politeness strategies most because he was the character who had the utterances and dialogues most compared with the other main characters. Pooh, as the second main character, did not use any off record strategy to all other characters he interacted with. The last main character, Madeline, used the off record politeness strategy most, in contrast with Pooh, even with the fact that she had the least dialogues from all of the main characters. For the motivation in using politeness strategies, only Christopher had the two kinds of motivation in using politeness strategies: intrinsic payoffs and sociological variables circumstances; Pooh and Madeline only had one of those kinds: intrinsic payoffs.

**Keywords:** politeness, politeness strategies, motivation in using politeness strategies

### **ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini berfokus pada strategi kesantunan yang digunakan oleh karakter utama dari film Christopher Robin. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan strategi kesantunan yang digunakan oleh karakter utama dari film tersebut dan untuk menjelaskan motivasi dari karakter utama dari film tersebut dalam menggunakan strategi kesantunan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis konten. Sumber data dari penelitian ini adalah naskah dari film Christopher Robin dan transkrip dari dialog yang dilakukan di dalam film tersebut. Data diambil dari dialog-dialog dan ujaran-ujaran dari karakter utama yang mengandung strategi kesantunan. Semua karakter-karakter utama dari film tersebut menggunakan strategi kesantunan. Akan tetapi, tidak*

*semua karakter utama menggunakan semua tipe dari strategi kesantunan. Christopher adalah orang yang paling banyak menggunakan strategi kesantunan dikarenakan dia merupakan karakter yang memiliki ujaran-ujaran dan dialog-dialog paling banyak dibandingkan dengan karakter utama yang lain. Pooh, sebagai karakter utama kedua, tidak menggunakan strategi tutur tidak langsung apapun terhadap semua karakter yang berinteraksi dengannya. Karakter utama yang terakhir, Madeline, menggunakan strategi kesantunan tidak langsung paling banyak, kontras dengan Pooh, bahkan dengan fakta bahwa dia memiliki dialog paling sedikit dari semua karakter-karakter utamanya. Untuk motivasi dalam menggunakan strategi kesantunan, hanya Christopher yang mempunyai dua jenis motivasi dalam menggunakan strategi kesantunan: imbalan intrinsik dan keadaan variabel sosiologis; Pooh dan Madeline hanya mempunyai satu dari jenis-jenisnya: imbalan intrinsik.*

**Kata Kunci:** *kesantunan, strategi kesantunan, motivasi dalam menggunakan strategi kesantunan*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a tool for humans to interact and communicate from one individual to another. People can do the communication activities in their daily life by using language. By communicating, people can get information, express their feelings and wants, and share their ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, even though communication has become one of the important aspects in a human's daily life activities, a speaker also needs to consider or control more the way to communicate. If the speaker does not pay attention to this, they may harm other people who are involved in the communication activity such as harming other people's feelings. Therefore, politeness is needed in communication, such as having good manners when communicating something to others. According to Mills, "Being polite means expressing respect towards the person you are talking to and avoiding offending them" (6). So, people need to choose the proper diction and proper way to communicate to keep maintaining the good relationship with their interlocutors.

This research uses the theory that connects between the politeness activity and the linguistic studies for analyzing this research: politeness strategies of communication proposed by Brown and Levinson. According to Brown and Levinson, politeness strategies in communication are the strategies that are done by producing or using the utterance or expression that satisfies (or at least it is not (or less) threatening) self-wants of the hearer. The researcher finds that politeness in communication is really important to be learnt and used for language users, therefore it becomes the reason why the researcher takes this theory for doing the research besides taking another theory related to linguistics. *Christopher Robin* film indirectly teaches about the importance and goodness of being a kind hearted person, and teaches for being polite (including politeness in communicating) to others in no matter the condition and to whom the person we interact with. This film

also teaches that our family and good friends are the important matter in our life rather than anything else, which is why politeness comes as one of the ways to keep maintaining good relationship.

Two questions are formulated in this research. First one is politeness strategies used by the main characters of Christopher Robin film; and the second is the motivations of the main characters of the film in using the politeness strategies. The purposes of this research are to find out the politeness strategies used by the main characters of Christopher Robin film and to explain the motivations of the main characters of the film in using the politeness strategies. Theoretically, this research brings contributions as theoretical reference to the other writers or researchers who want to analyze using the same theory with this research, politeness strategies in communication. Practically, this research will show about how to use politeness strategies in communication while it hopefully will give more inspiration to the English language users to use politeness strategies in real life communication practices.

## **B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **1. Politeness Theory**

Politeness means the way of giving respect to other people while also at the same time avoiding sharing or communicating something considered impolite to do, socially and culturally (Mills 6). Politeness is also used as a resource to indicate that a person acknowledges his/her interlocutor as a human being and consider that the interlocutor(s) belong into the same group of practice, whereas the person attempts to deny their basic humanity through the use of language which would usually be considered extremely impolite (Mills 126). Because a person cannot always guarantee that they will be likeable when they are talking, there is a way to avoid this bad case from happening. It is by using the proper use of diction and the proper way in communicating something, and that is called politeness strategies.

### **2. Politeness Strategies**

Politeness strategies are the strategies of communication that are done by producing an utterance or expression that is not (or less) threatening self-wants of the hearer. For example, uttering some appreciation to the hearer or saying something that does not damage the hearer's wants of freedom of doing something. Politeness strategies also can be said as the strategies to communicate something to other individuals as politely as possible (Brown and Levinson 91-93). Therefore, there are four major strategies that are proposed by Brown and Levinson.

#### **a. Bald on Record Strategy**

Bald on record strategy is used when a speaker wants to communicate something efficiently or to only communicate something that is more or the most needed to communicate (Brown and Levinson 95). It means the speaker here does not want to communicate something too much. However, bald on record has the other case in using it

which it is used to give respect for both the speaker and the hearer for a greater mutual relationship (Brown and Levinson 95), such as in a farewell “Good bye, folks!”

**b. Positive Politeness Strategy**

Positive politeness strategy is the strategy to give appreciation to the hearer to everything they do or say, and also can be the approval from the speaker to the hearer that they are belonging into the same group of communication that has a good intimacy (Brown and Levinson 101). The example of the usage of positive politeness strategy is when the speaker says something more magnificent to the hearer for respecting them, as in “What a tremendous house you have!”

**c. Negative Politeness Strategy**

Negative politeness strategy is the act to indicate that the speaker does not want to break the hearer’s wants to have freedom of action, and his attention unimpeded (Brown and Levinson 129). Negative politeness strategy performs the function of minimizing particular impositions on the hearers. One of the ways of a speaker to indicate that he does not coerce or impose the hearer, it is by expressing doubt so then the speaker is not implicitly imposing the wants of the hearer in doing something for the appropriateness. The example is “Could you help me doing the tasks, please?”

**d. Off Record Strategy**

Off record strategy is done when the speaker wants to ask something that may damage the hearer’s self-wants, but does not want to have the responsibility for doing it, and leaving up to the hearer to decide how to interpret it (Brown and Levinson 211). One of the ways in doing this strategy is by saying something that is not relevant, because the speaker invites the hearer to search for the interpretation of that utterance (Brown and Levinson 213). For example, “It’s so hot in here,” is done with the intention of giving a clue to the hearer to turn on the fan or the air conditioner.

**3. Motivation in Using Politeness Strategies**

Brown and Levinson (71-81) state that there are two kinds of motivations in using politeness strategies: the intrinsic payoffs and the sociological variables circumstances. Intrinsic payoffs are the a priori (knowing before experiencing) considerations of some advantage that the speaker may get when he/she does the politeness strategies to the hearer (Brown and Levinson 71). Further, each of the politeness strategies has their own advantages or benefits for the speaker who uses it. On the other hand, the sociological variables circumstances that become the motivations are social distance, relative power, and the absolute ranking of impositions (Brown and Levinson 74).

**C. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Methodologically, this researcher decided to have a qualitative research method, which was done by collecting data, classifying, and interpreting data in narrative sequence. Hancock says that qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena (7). Further, content analysis was used as the approach in analyzing this

research as it was defined by William as the method that reviews the forms of human communication in order to explore verbal, visual, behavioral patterns, themes, or biases from the content in human communications (69).

The data of this research are the utterances and the dialogues uttered by the main characters of the film that are supported by contextual situations containing politeness strategies. The sources of the data in this research are two: the script or screenplay of the film titled *Christopher Robin*, and the transcript of the dialogues done in the film. Then, the data collection technique was done by reading the film script and the transcript of dialogues thoroughly; then was continued by taking notes about the data related to the politeness strategies and the motivation in using the politeness strategies done by the main characters of the film; lastly the researcher then ordered the data after those were collected, and the way the data were ordered was following the way the film went chronologically.

After that, the data analysis in this research was done based on the steps proposed by Creswell (2018) in which the researcher reviewed the data by a five-phased cycle, they were (1) organize and prepare the data for analysis: where the found data were classified into three main categories (First main category was the politeness strategies done by *Christopher Robin*, second was the politeness strategies done by *Pooh*, and third was the politeness strategies done by *Madeline*); (2) read through all the data: where it was done for gaining the general sense of the information from the data and seeking the opportunity to reflect on the overall meaning of the data; (3) start coding all of the data: which the purpose was to make the data easier to be analyzed. The data coding was done with the method called 'magnitude coding' by Saldaña which it can consist of abbreviations that suggest the frequency, and then it is placed in a summary table (58). The codes in this research are based on the main characters of *Christopher Robin* film (CR, PH and MD), politeness strategies (BOR, PPL, NPL, and OFR), and motivation in using politeness strategies (IPO and SVC); (4) generate the description and themes: where the description in content analysis meant the one includes the detailed information about people, places, or events as the setting involved in human communication, and the themes were referred to the ones that appear as major findings in qualitative research; and (5) representing the descriptions and themes: where the descriptions were represented in the beginning paragraph of every data found and the themes were represented on the next paragraph of descriptions

Finally, the researcher used the data triangulation by Denzin (1973) to give more accuracy, validation, and to reduce the opportunity for getting a false interpretation. The data triangulation mentioned was done by getting the data source not only from the script of *Christopher Robin* film but also having the transcript of the dialogues done in the film.

## **D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Politeness Strategies Used by Christopher Robin**

Christopher used 20 politeness strategies in his film. The amounts of each type of politeness strategies used by Christopher are: 4 bald on record strategies, 11 positive politeness strategies, 4 negative politeness strategies, and 1 off record strategy. For the motivation in using the politeness strategies, Christopher had both of two kinds of motivations: intrinsic payoffs and sociological variables circumstances. The amounts of each motivation that was had by Christopher are: 17 intrinsic payoffs and 3 sociological variables circumstances.

#### **Data 9**

Cecil : We've got all weekend.

Christopher Robin : For?

Cecil : Gin Rummy!

Christopher Robin : We should probably try and play cards tomorrow, then.

(D09-CR-PPL-IPO)

This dialogue happened at the park nearby their apartments. Cecil was Christopher's neighbor. In this scene, they met each other there because Cecil saw Christopher was carrying something suspicious that was covered with Christopher's own coat (It was Pooh, but Christopher decided not to show Pooh to people). But, instead of asking what was inside, Cecil suddenly invited Christopher to join playing a card game called Gin Rummy at his apartment.

Cecil invited Christopher to play a card game with Christopher. Unfortunately, Christopher could not join the invitation because he had many works to complete that made him not have any time to join it. However, Christopher felt guilty and less respecting if he just directly rejected Cecil's invitation. So, in order to make Cecil not feel bad, he needed to inform Cecil more safely about the inability to join Cecil.

The way Christopher said the utterance was done with the positive politeness strategy, with the sub-strategy called 'avoiding disagreement' with the pseudo-agreement. The avoiding disagreement sub-strategy is used for the fake early agreement which it is used for avoiding the directive disagreement, done with the use of word 'then' at the end of the utterance (Brown and Levinson 115). The purpose of this sub-strategy is not to directly disagree with the hearer's opinion or desire. In this data, Cecil's desire was Christopher's presence in joining the invitation. Therefore, because Christopher could not join it, he used this strategy to avoid rejecting Cecil directly and for appreciating Cecil as the giver of the invitation.

## **Data 5**

Pooh : How old will I be, then?

Christopher Robin : 99. Silly old bear.

(D05-CR-PPL-SVC)

This dialogue happened in their special place called ‘Enchanted Place’ and this dialogue was the last conversation of little Christopher and Pooh before Christopher went to a boarding school. Before the conversation above, Christopher said that he would not be forgetting Pooh in his life, not even if he turned a hundred years old. Then, Pooh asked the question above to Christopher.

Christopher in this dialogue said that Pooh was a silly bear. However, the “silly old bear” phrase here was not a mockery to Pooh, but it was actually Christopher’s special mark to Pooh. It was not a mockery because the way Pooh accepted the utterance was by leaning his head to Christopher’s shoulder, which meant that Pooh did not feel mad at Christopher about the utterance spoken. Also, it was the way Pooh considered Christopher as his good friend and meant that he was well belonged to Christopher. The utterance might not be doable to be done when the speaker and the hearer did not have any close relationship. So, what made the utterance possible to be said by Christopher to Pooh was because they had a close relationship with each other. As contrast example, saying “silly old man” could be an impolite utterance if it were done to a stranger.

In politeness strategies, the social distance affects the way the speaker uses the politeness strategies, such as the speaker prefers to use the more polite way of speaking when it is done to the not-close-relationship-with person, and vice versa (Brown and Levinson 76-77). Therefore, the motivation of Christopher in saying his utterance belonged to the sociological variables circumstances, specifically the one called ‘social distance’. This utterance belonged to this kind of motivation because their closeness made the utterance possible to be said and was not considered impolite.

## **2. Politeness Strategies Used by Pooh**

Pooh used 12 politeness strategies in this film. Though, Pooh did not use any off record strategy in this film. The amounts of each type of politeness strategies used by Pooh are: 3 bald on record strategies, 5 positive politeness strategies, and 4 negative politeness strategies. For the motivation in using the politeness strategies, he did not have the one kind of motivation, which was the sociological variable circumstances motivation; he only had the intrinsic payoffs as his kind of motivation.

## **Data 10**

Pooh : Are you sure you wouldn’t like some, Christopher Robin?

Christopher Robin : Yes, I’m sure.

(D10-PH-BOR-IPO)

This dialogue happened inside the apartment of Christopher. Christopher brought Pooh into his apartment from outside because the day was starting to get night. After they were inside, Pooh started getting hungry because it was a long journey to go searching for his other doll friends. Knowing that, Christopher gave honey to Pooh to fulfill the hunger.

Pooh was enjoying the honey because, besides he was hungry, honey was his most favorite food. In the middle of enjoying the honey, he realized that he was the only one who ate the honey. So, because of that, Pooh wanted Christopher to eat and enjoy the honey together with him. The way he shared his wants was by offering Christopher to eat the honey too. Pooh did this as the way he respected Christopher as the one who gave the honey to him.

The offer done by Pooh was categorized as the utterance with the bald on record strategy; with the sub-strategy called 'saying an offer'. This sub-strategy is done to respect the hearer by initiatively offering something good to them (Brown and Levinson 99). Therefore, it was categorized as the utterance with this sub-strategy because Pooh offered Christopher to eat the honey together with him. Further, even though Christopher did not accept the offer, at least Pooh had shared his good willingness which is respecting Christopher as the honey giver.

## **Data 11**

Pooh : Piglet? Eeyore? Tigger? Where is everybody?

Christopher Robin : Exactly. Where is Tigger, or Kanga, or Roo?

Pooh : That's why I'm here.

Christopher Robin : Well, I'm sure I don't know where they are. 30 years haven't thought about them, that's a years.

Pooh : But we think about you every day.

(D11-PH-PPL-IPO)

This dialogue happened inside Christopher's apartment. The dialogue started at the moment when Pooh's head got stuck by a gramophone speaker: happened when Pooh randomly walked and then crashed the gramophone. Suddenly, Pooh asked where everybody else was. Pooh asked that because he had not found his other friends from his own house to Christopher's. But, Christopher did not know either since he had not seen them in around 30 years.

Pooh said that he and his friends always thought about Christopher every day. Pooh said this because he truly considered Christopher a good friend of his that even he still cared deeply for Christopher in years of not seeing each other. In saying the utterance, the motivation was Pooh wanted to share his care to Christopher. He wanted to do it because Christopher was his best friend so then he wanted to do everything to please Christopher.



The utterance was done with the positive politeness strategy, with the sub-strategy called ‘fulfilling the wants of the hearer.

The motivation of Pooh belonged to the intrinsic payoffs, specifically positive politeness payoffs. One of the payoffs when a speaker uses this strategy is the speaker can satisfy the wants of the hearer of being liked and cared about by others. It belongs to this kind of motivation because Pooh wanted to make Christopher know that he cared Christopher so much. Further, Christopher mentioned that he did not remember his friends since he had not met them in many years. Even so, Pooh ‘did not mind if Christopher did not have the same feeling with him. This meant that Pooh really considered Christopher as the best person in his life and Pooh selflessly cared about Christopher.

### **3. Politeness Strategies Used by Madeline**

Madeline used 7 politeness strategies in this film. The amounts of each type of politeness strategies used by Madeline are: 2 bald on record strategies, 1 positive politeness strategy, 2 negative politeness strategies, and 2 off record strategies. For the motivation in using the politeness strategies, she only had the intrinsic payoffs as her kind of motivation in using politeness strategies, similar to Pooh.

#### **Data 8**

Madeline : Do you think you could read to me for a minute?

Christopher Robin : Of course. Yes.

Christopher Robin : "The Victorian Era signified the height of the Industrial Revolution, and was viewed as the apex of the British Empire." We've got good one here. "It followed the Georgian period and preceded the Edwardian period--"

Madeline : Actually, Father.

Christopher Robin : Yes?

Madeline : I'm a bit tired.

(D08-MD-OFR-IPO)

This dialogue happened in Madeline’s bedroom when she wanted to go to sleep. But before she went to sleep, she asked her father, Christopher Robin, to read a book to her first. However, she was already not in a good mood by a little bit. It happened because before the conversation, Christopher convinced her that he could not join in taking a holiday together with her and her mother. So, she expected that she might feel better if she asked her father to read a book to spend a little time together with her.

Unfortunately, her father was not reading the book that she wanted to be read: the bedtime story instead of the history book, which it made her feel worse because she was tired of reading history books. The way she said her disappointment was by saying she felt tired and decided to go to sleep. But in the real case, she did not feel tired and she said this

only to make her father stop his reading. This was proven by after Christopher left the room, Madeline was turning her room light back on to continue reading her book all alone.

The utterance done by Madeline belonged to the utterance with the off record strategy, with the sub-strategy called ‘understating’. This sub-strategy is done by saying some information less than is required. It belongs to this sub-strategy because she only communicated what she felt in short words instead of saying the real case. Further, the tiredness mentioned could also be meant as her tiredness to her father’s actions in those days, but she could only say it to her father by understating it, thus respecting her father. For instance, it might be damaging to her father’s feelings if she said it directly, such as “Stop your reading, Father.” or something similar.

## **Data 26**

Evelyn : How’s it going in here?  
Madeline : Fine. Wonderful! Everything’s just perfect.  
Evelyn : Yeah, I can see that.

(D11-PH-PPL-IPO)

These conversations were done at the cottage where Madeline and Evelyn, her mother, were taking holiday together. Before the conversation, Christopher accidentally met Madeline when he was going back to his office from the tree that led to the Hundred Acre Wood. She felt confused because it turned out that Christopher was there when he had said that he could not join them. However, still, Christopher decided to continue going to his office instead which meant he could not join them.

Because of that, Madeline’s level of disappointment got rising because her father could not join her and her mother to the cottage for taking a holiday there together. Therefore, Madeline could not hold her anger anymore and was then mad at it. She even dropped her books from the table to the floor of her room. Hearing that, Evelyn entered her room and asked Madeline what happened to it. The way Madeline answered in the middle of feeling mad was in contrast with what she actually meant: it was done by saying that everything went perfectly but the actual case that happened was bad. Therefore, the contrast utterance was categorized as the utterance with the off record strategy, with the sub-strategy called ‘being ironic’ because this sub-strategy is done when the speaker wants to share their meaning indirectly and uttered it by saying the opposite from what it actually means (Brown and Levinson 221).

Madeline had the motivation in saying her utterance with off record strategy. The motivation was she did not want her mother to feel bad (thus respecting her mother’s feeling) if she said her feeling directly, especially when it was expressed in a bad way; and she did not want to blame her mother either because the fault did not come from her mother. Therefore, the motivation belonged to the intrinsic payoffs, specifically off record payoffs. It belongs to this kind of motivation because one of the off record payoffs is the

speaker can reduce the risk of being regarded as an impolite person by the hearer (Brown and Levinson 71).

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

All of the main characters of this film used politeness strategies. From all of the main characters, Christopher was the one who used the politeness strategies most because he was the most-appeared main character with the most utterances and dialogues in the film. Christopher used the positive politeness strategies most rather than the other type of politeness strategies. It became the most-used politeness strategy because he often gave appreciation to his friends after they do something good to him, therefore respecting them. Moreover, it was also because he used the positive politeness strategy in some interesting ways, therefore reasons, which made the strategy become the most used one.

Pooh became the second 'person' who used the politeness strategies most. It was because he was the doll friend who had the most dialogues compared to the other doll friends. However, Pooh in this film did not use off record strategy in interacting with his friends. It happened because he did not want his friends to misunderstand what he said to them since the off record was shared indirectly. Also, Pooh did not have the sociological variables circumstances as his motivation in using the politeness strategies. This meant that in using the politeness strategies, Pooh did not want to see some circumstance first: he was just being polite to everyone at every moment and conditions. This teaches that being polite does not need to see at some circumstances first, such as only being polite to the close-relationship-with person, but instead, being polite can be done to everyone and at any time.

Madeline became the person who used the politeness strategies least compared to the other main characters of the film because she was the one who had the least dialogues and utterances. However, from all of the main characters, she was the one who used the off record strategy most. This meant that Madeline was pretty concerned about the hearer's self-wants, and interestingly, she interacted more politely with the person who was socially close to her. By being polite to everyone she meets, it is the way Madeline breaks the point of view of: a person does not have to be very polite to the socially-close person. Therefore, this teaches that being polite can be done to everyone.

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