

Linguistic Politeness in Public Virtual Communication

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Abstract

Linguistic politeness has become an interesting discussion among linguists. Many thoughts and concepts have been constructed in order to explain the phenomenon of linguistic politeness. In fact, there are controversies among these concepts or models. However, currently available models of linguistic politeness tend to focus on direct (face-to-face) communication. What about public virtual communication? This article aims to discuss linguistic politeness in public virtual communication where important elements in the models of linguistic politeness that exist today can be tested. By trawling the comments of several videos on YouTube, we found that positive politeness is the polarity of politeness that is mostly used. Meanwhile, negative politeness is still outnumbered even with the bald strategy. Using descriptive analysis, we express the opinion that positive politeness is no longer a communication strategy in public virtual communication but a norm. Linguistic politeness is only really identified in negative politeness because even though they don't know each other and therefore social distance cannot be measured, they still use negative politeness to maintain their self-esteem and the people they communicate with. In this regard, it is very clear that linguistic courtesy in public virtual communication is a "face-saving" act, especially negative politeness.

Keywords: *linguistic politeness, positive politeness, negative politeness, face-saving, virtual public communication*

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1. Introduction

Linguistic politeness has been an unavoidable intriguing topic in linguistics, especially pragmatics or language in use. The intricate emerged in the discussions concerning linguistic politeness, consequently, makes this topic more interesting today than before. It is hard to believe that linguistic politeness has born various perspectives: social-norm, conversational-maxim, face-saving like discussed by Fraser (1990). Brown (2015) counts social rules, adherence to politeness maxims, and face management as three perspectives to be considered politeness or linguistic politeness in specific.

Dating back to the earlier times, linguists slightly controversially formulated linguistic phenomena counted as linguistic politeness, from Grice, Lakoff, Leech, to Brown and Levinson. In the 1990s, Bruce Fraser came with a new perspective which seems to quite

disagree with the earlier perspectives proposed by the names mentioned above. Bruce (1990) proposed a perspective to see linguistic politeness as a conversational-contract.

Overall, linguistic politeness has been seen as consequences of sociocultural values or norms that dictate how individuals use language, psychological effect resulted in an interaction and situations that influence linguistic interaction. The author is tempted to assume that we had paid attention to the spoken language to capture the dynamic of linguistic politeness. Is it the reason why it is rare to find linguistic politeness captured in written language or written communication?

As discussed later, to identify the linguistic features representing politeness in written communication, especially in online forums groups, is tempting. It is argued that some of the theoretical foundations where the linguistic politeness perspectives stand on unexpectedly become complicated in that particular communicative situation.

This article is not intended to propose a new perspective in linguistic politeness, neither to promote a certain perspective. The author intends to invite the readers to capture the phenomena of linguistic politeness (which also implies impoliteness) in the written communication situation especially in expressing appreciation.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1. Linguistic Politeness

The word *politeness* is generally understood as a matter of "proper" talk or behavior. Webster defines it as having or showing good manners or respect for other people. Meanwhile, good or not good is always based on a particular view (religion, society, culture, or institution) where other people are always involved, politeness is simply defined as socially correct or proper conduct.

Based on the quite simplistic definition of politeness above, it seems like politeness is all about "being polite" by following rules applied in a social institution for violating that rules can result in offense in the other party or can result in unexpected consequences like punishment or, at least, self-esteem lose.

Coming into linguistics, the meaning of politeness turns wider than what it was. In linguistics, politeness does not only cover proper conduct but also improper conduct. Linguistic politeness is not only about "being polite" in communication but also about "being impolite". Being polite or impolite is a range in linguistic politeness. The word politeness itself, in linguistics, captures both politeness and impoliteness. Even, as we can see later, linguistic politeness has turned from socially proper conduct to communication strategy to achieve a certain communication goal.

Fraser (1990) implies that theorists (including linguists) don't explicitly define what they mean by linguistic politeness. For example, Fraser writes that although Lakoff entitled her paper 'The logic of politeness', she never actually says what she takes politeness to be. Fraser infers that Lakoff sees politeness to be the avoidance of offense. It is in the later work of Lakoff that she gives a clear definition of politeness as "a device used in order to reduce friction in personal interaction." (Fraser, 1990:223). Brown (2015) sees politeness as crucial conduct to the construction and maintenance of the social relationship. Overall, the theorists build their linguistic politeness model in order to teach us how to decrease the chance of offending other people while speaking.

It is interesting to see that without the linguistic politeness model, we tend to create friction in interaction. The existence of politeness models in general, including linguistic politeness, has given us a picture that as human beings we need to be educated on how to speak or how to act. Communication, then, is seen as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavor without a set of rules we call etiquette. Without those, we cannot construct and maintain a social relationship. The ability to communicate (language, linguistic competence) is a “gift” but men have a quality to turn it into a “curse”, so to speak.

The meaning of linguistic politeness as “being polite in using language so we do not offend other people” is now outdated because, as *speech act* teaches us, words or utterances are also usable to threaten other people that Brown and Levinson (1987) would call *Face Threatening Act* (FTA). Linguistic politeness turns from a set of rules or etiquette in using language to decrease a social irritation to a communication strategy used to achieve the communication goal. Cutting (2002) mentions that [linguistic] politeness encompasses an array of choices made at the linguistic level to fulfill some communicative goals. Based on Cutting and some other theorists, Maha (2014) proposes a definition of linguistic politeness as a set of linguistic choices or strategies employed to achieve some goals though these goals are not well determined.

2.1.1. *Models of Linguistic Politeness*

Maha (2014), Brown (2015), and many other theorists agree that there are three models of linguistic politeness which are derived from the perspectives on it: social-norms or rules, conversational-maxims, and face-saving acts. Additionally, Fraser (1990) proposes the fourth model of language politeness that sees linguistic politeness as a conversational-contract. The first two models have been criticized for being ‘too simple’ and ‘too complex’ (Fraser, 1990) or culturally biased (Thomas, 1995). Thomas (1995:177) mentions that Fraser’s model of politeness is sketchy compared to those of Leech and Brown and Levinson and it is difficult to judge how it might operate in practice. Therefore, basically, all models of linguistic politeness are seemed to have strengths and weaknesses. However, since this paper does not focus on the strength and weaknesses of those models rather to pick one of them to be used in this study, then the readers are invited to look at the brief overviews on the models as presented below.

2.1.1.1. *Linguistic Politeness as Social Rules*

It is not uncommon to have a belief that every parent teaches their children how to dress, how to eat, and, of course, how to speak. The ‘teaching’ is usually based on the culture of that society. Children are taught to speak differently based on their ages and genders by considering the age or gender of whom they speak to. They are taught so to avoid being impolite in speaking or to not offend other people. Western and eastern have different rules and even neighbors have different rules of how to speak politely. In North Mollucas, Indonesia, when you speak to an older person (or higher in social status), you should use “saya” as the first personal pronoun (polite I in English) and not “kita” (inclusive we in English but considered impolite if being used to replace I). However, in few places in North Mollucas, using “kita” is just as polite as “saya”. Therefore, different rules apply in different societies and this is one of the criticisms directed to this model as being culturally biased.

Neither Fraser (1990) nor Brown (2015) mentions the theorist’s name that cultivates this model but Maha (2014) implies that it is Lakoff who is responsible for this model. Lakoff herself might not intend to cultivate that model but to consider that we should like to have some kind of pragmatic rules, dictating whether an utterance is pragmatically well-formed or

not, and the extent to which it deviates if it does (1973:296). Therefore, what Lakoff does is more pragmatic than social. However, since pragmatics sees language and socio-cultural context inseparable, then it is hard to refuse that Lakoff is not cultivating linguistic politeness as a social rule.

Lakoff is influenced by Grice's conversational maxims and that leads her to state that the first pragmatic rule is "Be Clear" while the second rule is "Be Polite". In order to be polite, she puts three sub-sets under "Be Polite" which are: don't impose (formal-impersonal politeness), give options (informal politeness), and make (the hearer) feel good (intimate politeness) (Maha, 2014).

This model is confirmed if we interpret "Be Polite" and its sub-rules in accordance with a specific sociocultural context. In other words, we should speak as polite as what the given society (and culture) consider as polite although it is impolite in our own culture. For example, different culture has a different way or words to make the hearer feel good which will not be working for the other cultures.

This model, however, has been considered as simplistic. For example, Okamoto (1999:51) mentions that:

"These theories (*the writer refers not only to Lakoff's but also the other theorists', italic mine*) do not consider cultural and situational variability in the meanings of politeness; politeness rules and maxims are proposed without detailed descriptions of when and how to use them..."

Lakoff's model should be seen as an "advice" in using language rather than a rule. Being clear and polite in speaking are two rules that can be found in every culture but when and how to be clear and polite are not universal since, like Huang (2007:119) shortly says (if we consider being clear and polite as two perlocutionary effects), many speech acts are culture-specific. We need to refer to what a particular society accepts as clear and polite and consequently in order to apply Lakoff's model we need to study more than language but also the culture of a society.

2.1.1.2. Linguistic Politeness as a Conversational Maxim

The term conversational maxim has been known in Pragmatics and is popularized by Grice with his four maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner). These maxims seem to inspire Lakoff in modeling her 'three rules of rapport' as mentioned previously. However, the main significance of the Grice's maxims is to ensure the understanding of conversation (comprehension) and not directly related to politeness. In other words, these Gricean conversational maxims are formulated to avoid misunderstanding rather than friction in interaction; Grice calls it Cooperative Principle (CP). It is Lakoff who advances the maxims in order to build her linguistic politeness model.

Lakoff is not the only theorist influenced by Grice's maxims but also Leech (1983). If Grice's maxims are called CP, Leech prefers to name his maxims or model as Politeness Principle (PP) that implies his intention to not only refers to the understanding of conversation but also to politeness. It can be seen by his distinction between what the speaker means by conveying an utterance (the speaker's illocutionary goal) and what position the speaker is taking on being truthful, polite, ironic, and the like (the speaker's social goal). Fraser states that in this regard, Leech posits two sets of conversational principles: Interpersonal Rhetoric and Textual Rhetoric, each constituted by a set of maxims, which socially constrain communicative

behavior in specific ways. Leech treats politeness within the domain of Interpersonal Rhetoric (1990:224).

Leech proposes six interpersonal maxims:

1. Tact maxim: minimize hearer costs; maximize hearer benefits. This maxim implies Meta maxim: do not put others in a position where they have to break the Tact Maxim.
2. Generosity maxim: minimize your own benefits; maximize your hearer's benefits.
3. Approbation maxim: minimize hearer dispraise; maximize hearer praise.
4. Modesty maxim: minimize self-praise; maximize self-dispraise
5. Agreement maxim: minimize disagreement between yourself and others; maximize agreement between yourself and others.
6. Sympathy maxim: minimize antipathy between yourself and others; maximize sympathy between yourself and others.

Besides these six maxims, Leech also formulates a set of scales for each maxim. It is so because politeness, in Leech's perspective, is a matter of degree. By consulting to the scales, it is possible for the hearer to determine what 'strategy' to be used to avoid friction in interaction by picking one or more of the maxims:

1. Cost-benefit scale: represents the cost of the benefit of an act to the speaker and hearer.
2. Optionality scale: represents the relevant illocutions, ordered by the amount of choice which the speaker permits the hearer.
3. Indirectness scale: represents the relevant illocutions, ordered in terms of hearer 'work' to infer speaker intention.
4. Authority scale: represents the relative right for the speaker to impose wishes on the hearer.
5. Social distance scale: represents the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer.

According to Fraser (1990), on Leech's view, the Tact Maxim can be observed only as follows: As the hearer costs, the hearer authority relative to the speaker, and the social distance increases, the greater will be the need for providing the hearer with options and the greater the need for indirectness in the formulation of the expression conveying the message. Moreover, Leech also distinguishes Relative Politeness and Absolute Politeness. Relative politeness is politeness in a specific situation and absolute politeness is politeness directly associated with the speaker's actions (e.g. order vs. offer).

In the maxims above, we can see that Leech uses the words *to minimize* and *maximize*. Those words represent what he calls Negative Politeness (minimizing impoliteness) and Positive Politeness (maximizing politeness).

Leech even goes further. According to him, the speaker's illocutionary goals also function to determine the degree and polarity of politeness. There are four illocutionary functions in Leech's (1983):

1. Competitive: ordering, asking, demanding, begging; negative politeness is required to minimize the discord between the speaker's illocutionary goal and the speaker's social goal.

2. Convivial: offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating; positive politeness may be required.
3. Collaborative: asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing; neither negative nor positive politeness is required.
4. Conflictive: threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding; politeness is inapplicable.

Leech's politeness model is far more detailed than Grice's CP and Lakoff's model, it is clear. However, this turns into unexpected complexity because those maxims are potentially overlapping and for some reason, we have no way of knowing which maxims are to be applied, what scales are available, how they are to be formulated, what their dimensions are, when and to what degree they are relevant, and so forth (Fraser, 1990). The complexity that arises is not because of the insufficiency of Leech's model. In fact, this model is too complicated.

Leech (2005:4) himself does not refuse if "being too complicated" is one of the criticisms addressed to his politeness model. In his 2005 paper, he even formulated a new model which he calls Grand Strategy of Politeness (GSP) but most of all he criticizes Brown and Levinson model (Face-Saving model, discussed later) and put some crucial distinctions to state a thick border between his model and B&L's model. For example, he turns positive politeness and negative politeness to pos-politeness and neg-politeness because B&L also has those terms with different meanings; he also changes the term maxim to constrain because that term is easily misconstrued (or same with Grice's?). In that, Leech does not "simplify" his model after receiving criticism as being too complex but to restate his principles in a quite different way.

2.1.1.3. Linguistic Politeness as Face-Saving Act

Face-saving act or face management is a linguistic politeness model developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The term face in this model can be translated into self-esteem. The meaning of face is derived from Goffman (1971) who defines face as an individual's publicly manifest self-esteem. Moreover, Goffman says that in terms of social interaction, including linguistic interaction, humans have two desires. Firstly, humans have the desire to be approved by other people and this desire is known as a positive face. Secondly, humans have a desire not to offend other people and this desire is known as a negative face.

Brown and Levinson's model of linguistic politeness is built on Goffman's perspective. This perspective, according to Brown (2015) is quite universal because all people in the world want to be approved as well as none wants to be offended. However, this model is still criticized mainly by Leech (2005) for being culturally biased.

To understand B&L's model of linguistic politeness, we need to define some terms used in that model. It is important to note that those terms are not formulated as maxims (like either Grice or Leech) but "social facts" that need to take into account during linguistic interaction.

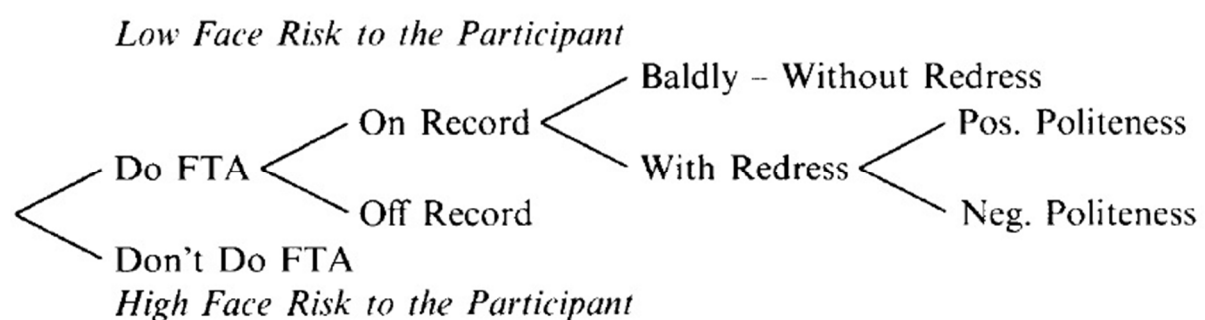
The first term must be the face. As mentioned above, the face is understood as self-esteem or self-image which is attained by efforts or given by a particular authority in a given society. This face is then divided into two sub-faces; positive and negative face. A positive face is a desire to be approved or appreciated and a negative face is a desire to claim the personal territories, preserves, and rights. The face or self-esteem, according to Fraser (1990:229), is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and any threat to face must be continually monitored during an interaction. Because some acts in interaction can potentially threaten the face, then a linguistic politeness model is needed to soften the acts. Sometimes, a

speaker is unaware if his acts indirectly threaten the hearer although he does not intend to do so. Sometimes, the speaker's appreciation is not well-manifested so that the hearer misunderstands the speaker by inferring that the speaker is trying to offend him. B&L then started to formulate their model by considering that polite intention is a message and it can be conveyed through utterances.

Based on the positive and negative face, B&L formulated positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is any utterances expressing or representing solidarity or camaraderie which can be related to Lakoff's personal and intimacy politeness. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is any utterances expressing or representing social boundary or restriction which can be related to Lakoff's impersonal politeness. We experience positive and negative politeness every day. A wife expresses positive politeness to her husband because she approves her husband and wants to be approved by her husband. A student expresses negative politeness to her lecturer because she does not want to offend him. She knows that her lecturer has a "territory" that she should not "enter". Or, she appreciates the lecturer's restraint. A wife also expresses negative politeness to her husband if she is a student and her husband is her lecturer and the interaction happens in the classroom. In other words, we speak differently to different people and in different situations. We speak differently simply because we don't want to threaten the hearer's face or our own face. To avoid face-threatening, we need to extract the sociocultural-sensitive variables in the above example.

In B&L's model, there are three variables that we need to mentally calculate before and during interaction: Social Distance (D), Relative Power (P), and Absolute Ranking (R). Social Distance is a distance between the speaker and the hearer; in effect, the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share (wife-husband, student-lecturer). Relative Power is the degree of power that the speaker possesses to impose his or her will on the hearer (husband to wife, lecturer to the student). Absolute Ranking is the ranking of imposition in the culture, both in terms of the expenditure of goods and/or services by the hearer, the right of the speaker to perform the act, and the degree to which the hearer welcomes the imposition (1987:74ff). By calculating these three variables, we can estimate the risk of face-loss which is called Weightiness (W). Without considering these variables, we tend to threaten the face (both the speaker's and the hearer's faces are lost) and in B&L's model, it is called Face Threatening Act (FTA).

In its heart, B&L's model of linguistic politeness is a strategy to minimize the risk of face-loss. Fraser (1990) summarized the B&L's taxonomy of possible strategies for performing FTAs as follow:



B&L's Taxonomy of FTA Adopted from Fraser (1990)

On record means "noted" or uttered. It is called bald-on record if the speaker utters it clearly in an unequivocal way like "Shut the window" or "Stop a moment" while the redressive-on record may involve positive politeness or negative politeness depend on the speaker's rational assessment of the face risk (weightiness) to the hearer ($W_x = D(S, H) + P(S, H) + R_x$) where S stands for speaker and H stands for the hearer. The greater the amount of W, the higher the face risk (W_x).

Off record requires more complex inferences which are, according to Fraser, motivated by factors other than politeness, for example, evading giving a direct answer to a question, or playing with language.

Overall, B&L's model of linguistic politeness can be implemented by assessing the degree of social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer. Then, the speaker assesses the difference in "power" between them. After that, the speaker must be able to assess the absolute ranking or "roles" between them (is the speaker superior or inferior to the hearer in the given context). Finally, by knowing the degree of face-loss risk (W), the speaker can determine what strategy to be used to achieve the communication goal.

2.2. Linguistic Politeness in Virtual Public Communication

Since 2019 until this paper is written, 2020, the pandemic phenomenon of Corona Virus has limited humans' face-to-face communication and therefore online communication is preferred. The ability to use internet-connected devices to communicate has become a required ability in many professional fields (economy, education, military, etc.). Moreover, communicating through social media is now common in our society at all levels of age and status. Consequently, language is used (to communicate) more often than before and it is safe to assume that we have communicated through the internet more often than face-to-face (hereafter FtF) communication since the distance is no longer a problem anymore.

Online communication, however, is not to replace FtF communication although many programs have been developed to communicate not only text but also audiovisual contents. It cannot replace FtF communication although real-time audiovisual communication is now available for us. There is a sort of mental variables "sacrificed" in online communication because FtF communication is undeniably our nature of communication; longing cannot be paid by text-messages.

There are different kinds of online forum and it is important to briefly look at them to clarify what kind of online forum is discussed in this paper. At least four kinds of the online forum are available today: discussion forum, feedback forum, Q&A forum, and article forum (Ure, 2014).

Discussion forum: it is a forum used to discuss various topics and usually the topic discussed is put under a certain category. The member of that forum posts a topic and starts the discussion and the other members respond by giving their opinions towards the topic. Debating is very usual in this kind of forum since the members are free to express their thoughts as long as they follow the forum rules.

Feedback forum: it is a forum used to get feedback from the other members of the forum. Different from the discussion forum, the member posts a question to get feedback from the other members. Although members can comment, agree or disagree on someone's feedback on a question posted, a debate rarely happens in this group because the members are not motivated to argue since this kind of group is not a discussion group.

Q&A forum: it is a forum slightly similar to the feedback forum. The difference is that this forum is specific to one object and sometimes owned by a company to discuss their product. Moreover, in this forum, the owner of a product provides questions and answers but the members (people who registered in that forum) can respond to the Q&A. This kind of forum is different from a FAQ page (Frequently Asked Question) where people cannot respond to the Q&A. Microsoft or Amazon has this kind of forum. This forum, eventually, is for the “users” of an object or product of a particular platform.

Article forum: in this forum, the members are allowed to post their thoughts in a detailed way in the form of an article. The other members then comment on the posts either to support or against the thoughts presented in the articles.

Forums are also distinguished by their level of formality. Most universities in the world have their forums and only those who are formally registered in a university can be a member of that university forum. Most forums on the internet are non-formal where anyone can be a member of the forum.

In this research, the writer takes data from comments on the videos on YouTube. YouTube is indirectly a forum because it provides the members to discuss anything related to the videos posted and watched. It is not a formal forum and anyone having Google account can join YouTube (hence YT). It means that the members of YT are ranged from amateurs to professionals of any fields or disciplines, from young to old.

Since people usually don't put "honest" information in their profile (credential), it is hard to assess directly the relevant "power" influencing the way people on YT communicate (being polite or impolite linguistically) by commenting and responding on the comments. Most of them are not known each other so that it is hard to imagine that they can assess the weightiness (W_x) before they write their comments.

We are inspired by Park (2008) who evaluates how linguistic politeness and Face-Work are applied in computer-mediated communication. That research shows that:

Interpersonal communication features are realized in an online discussion in the form of politeness tactics. In other words, participants pursue positive-face desire by reducing social distance, resulting in the creation of close and solidarity-oriented interpersonal relationships. Accordingly, positive politeness and bald-on-record (i.e., direct speech acts) strategies are frequently used. A variety of devices are employed in realizing positive politeness tactics. The most frequently occurring tactics include the seeking of common ground and agreement and the use of informal speech style, in-group language use, jokes, and small talk. These tactics engender a positive atmosphere for furthering interaction and collaboration among group members (Park, 2008:2208).

However, Park's participants “know” each other and the forum type is different. In an online forum like YT, most of the members do not know each other and a member just recognizes another member by looking at their credentials. Even, most of the time, people just answer the questions they are required to answer (or interested to answer) without looking at the profile of the owner of the question. Therefore, it is very interesting to look at how the linguistic politeness strategies are applied in the communication in this forum.

3. Methods

This study is a descriptive qualitative study since the data of the study is in the form of linguistic passages or words. Nevertheless, in an attempt to describe the data, descriptive statistics may be used. The data of this research are taken from the feedbacks from a list of randomly taken comments in YT. The feedbacks collected are then evaluated in terms of the linguistic politeness strategies by following the models outlined above. The data are also restricted or reduced when possible due to the numbers of feedbacks. The data are then discussed by using content analysis after being sorted according to what model or strategy is represented by each passage (feedbacks). The profiles of the feedback givers are kept anonymous. Hillier's practical procedures (Hillier, 2004) are adapted here to specify the relevant variables and describe the data. The data are then discussed descriptively to draw a conclusion.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Finding

4.1.1. Relevant Variables

Comments towards three videos are collected and reduced due to the numbers of the comments and the similarities and relevance of the comments to the video. From the comments, relevant variables to discuss are then identified and stated. The variables are the strategy identified within each comment that represents the politeness as a desire to maintain or to threat face: positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald-on-record. From the data, the researcher identifies that the commentators apply either positive or negative politeness to express their appreciation. Moreover, other expressions are also identified: jokes, insults, complaints, suggestions, requests, and the use of icons. However, since this research focuses on the appreciative expression, the other expressions are not deeply discussed.

4.1.2. Data Description

Extracted from 52 comments taken from 3 videos on YouTube, here are the percentages of the usage of linguistic politeness strategy:

Politeness Strategy	%
Positive Politeness	56%
Negative Politeness	21%
Bald	23%

From the 52 comments, here are the percentages of the appreciative expression and "other" expression:

Expression	%
Appreciation	77%
Other	23%

The researcher also calculates the use of each politeness strategy (positive, negative, and bald) to express appreciation and other expression and the percentage can be seen as follow:

Strategy	Appreciative Expression	Other Expression
Positive Politeness	63%	33%
Negative Politeness	20%	25%
Bald	18%	42%

Please take note that the other expression consists of several expressions. These other expressions are not discussed deeply in this research.

4.2. Discussions

Comments on a video on YouTube can run into the hundreds or even thousands depending on the level of popularity of the video and how interesting (or controversial) the video is. In addition, comments on a video are also not only limited to appreciation but also insults and jokes. In fact, commentators often express "mixed intent" such as appreciating through jokes or insults through praise. This study only focuses on appreciative expressions, but on several occasions, the author has to show other expressions contained in the comments column of the selected video.

In the tables that have been presented earlier, it can be seen that the commentators tend to use positive politeness strategies compared to negative politeness. Furthermore, positive politeness was also found to be used more to express appreciation than negative politeness. However, we cannot assume that all commentators are commenting in such a conscious manner as not everyone understands the issue of linguistic politeness. Commentators whose comments were netted in this study may be aware of their conveying intent and the effects of using their language patterns but they do not necessarily understand that they are being linguistically polite or disrespectful. We can only assess the type of strategy commentators "use" and also use our understanding of speech acts to assess the meaning or intent they convey.

As previously mentioned, other expressions are also netted in the comments on each video. Apart from appreciative expressions, commentators also expressed requests, opinions, jokes, and insults. They also use icons that may represent their feelings. Comments other than appreciation are included in the "other" column.

Through the data descriptions in the tables above, the following are some important points that are implied by the difference in the percentage level of linguistic politeness strategies.

4.2.1. Positive Politeness: Camaraderie or Norm?

The high level of positive politeness in the comments that were screened indicates that the commentators perceive social distancing between themselves and the video creators as significant. They show that there is a "familiarity" between them even though in the physical world they do not know each other. We can assume this is one of the effects of information technology which "brings distance closer" but linguistic politeness does not only interpret distance as something physical but also psychological.

If we refer to B&L (1987) that positive politeness indicates acceptance and friendship, then we cannot deny that in this case, the commentators do not consider them or others as strangers. Furthermore, they tend to overlook any potential differences in social or academic strata. There is a possibility that distance (both social and psychological) does not really matter in virtual communication. This may be due to the opportunity factor to "hide" personal data (real credentials or profile) so that there is nothing to worry about (e.g. social irritation). The most sensible reason to exclude social distancing in virtual communications like this is that what matters is *what is communicated* and not *who is communicating*; the most important thing is information.

As for speeches that contain positive politeness, they always use informal expressions. In addition, positive politeness speech often carries a personal meaning. We know that people generally don't talk about personal matters unless the speakers and listeners have a close relationship or are friends. To strangers, people tend to speak general things and use more formal expressions. Based on the model put forward by B&L, it seems that many of us would think that people who don't know each other will tend to use negative politeness. However, this only applies to direct communication (FtF). Meanwhile, in indirect communication, people are free to use expressions to convey their meaning.

Informality and personal meaning can be identified in the following comments:

I really like the idea of teaching the computer to do something, it's kind of cute when the little computer icon jumps up and down like, "oh! I get it!" [C1.1]

You are so awesome. Thank you, from the depths of my previously very sore brain. I was an Arts major in school and enthusiastically avoided trying to learn this stuff until now. You're the first basic programming video maker who doesn't sound like the adults in Charlie Brown. Again, thank you for the migraine relief. [C1.7]

The two comments above both express appreciation for video 1. Both of them express positive politeness and this can be seen from the informality and personal information contained in the two comments. Obviously, irregularities are seen in C1.1 comments, for example, the use of the word 'cute' or the quote "oh! I get it!" Meanwhile, C1.7's comments also contain informality such as the use of the metaphorical "migraine relief" as well as personal information about the object of interest and praise.

As a speech, the two comments above contain positive politeness which should reflect camaraderie or social and psychological closeness. But in this case, it is not the case.

It is possible that positive politeness was formed in the comments because the purpose was to give thanks. This is as stated by Leech (1983) as one of the illocutionary functions that determine the polarity of politeness, namely convivial. That is, in this case, people tend to express positive politeness if they want to express gratitude, according to Leech. Meanwhile, B&L (1987) indicates that positive politeness expresses intimacy because only those who are familiar or expect familiarity use positive politeness in their speech.

Informality can also be seen from the way someone comments and one way is by looking at the completeness of the grammatical elements in the speech. The more formal the grammar

is, the more formal the situation created by the speech. We can identify positive politeness in a speech that is grammatically incomplete.

Good video! taught me lots [C1.13].

Thank you. Made me understand coding a lot better [C1.14]

The two comments above are very informal both in sound and grammar. Both also expressed appreciation. And neither of them has a subject in their second sentence. No one knows if these commenters have any relationship with the owner of the video but comments that are grammatically incomplete like this are very much found in virtual communication. Does this show that the polarity of politeness should not be determined by social and psychological distance (B&L) but by the illocutionary function of speech (Leech)?

Positive politeness, when viewed from the B&L model, can also be used to express complaints. That is, one can express a complaint using informal personal expressions as shown in the following comments:

I have such a low IQ I have to watch this ten more times! [C1.16]

If we interpret the above comment as a personal expression, then the expression validly contains positive politeness and this refers to B&L (1987). No one wants to say that he has a low IQ except for people who he thinks can be trusted. However, if we see this comment as a complaint, then Leech will include the comment in the Conflictive section where politeness cannot be applied.

At this point, it seems that we cannot deny that camaraderie is not the only reason to express positive politeness. In other words, in virtual communication, social and psychological closeness cannot be a reference to identify the presence of positive politeness in an expression. People feel free to use a form of expression which either consciously or unconsciously determines the polarity of the linguistic politeness of that form of expression. We have the right to assume that even if they didn't know the video maker, they chose a certain form of expression to convey who they were, or "their face."

Comments of positive politeness, in our opinion, do not necessarily indicate camaraderie. Commenters may have hopes or goals to build a camaraderie atmosphere in the comments column. Of course, this is limited to virtual communication contexts where social distance (D, in the B&L formula) is an element to be considered. There are other possibilities, for example, the commenters want to maintain a positive face (want to show that they are a friendly person) and do not want to show that they are a formal person. We do not have information about the relationship between the commenter and the owner of the video, but the form of expression used should be sufficient to give us information about the polarity of politeness that the expressions express.

The polarity of politeness is always based on the polarity of the fact that you want to keep. In the concept of linguistic politeness, a face consists of two polarities: a positive face and a negative face. A positive face is the face of acceptance, intimacy, and closeness. From this

positive face is born positive politeness. Conversely, the negative face is the face of restriction, honor, and self-respect. Negative politeness is born from the concept of negative faces. These two polarities of politeness are used in communication to maintain both polarities of the faces of all communicating people.

We have seen some examples of comments that show appreciation through expressions of positive politeness. However, if we look at the currently available models of linguistic politeness (B&L or Leech) we experience problems to analyze because there are certain elements that are not present in virtual communication. For example, as we saw that in the B&L model the element distance (D) is an important element for measuring the "effect" of expression of politeness, both positive and negative. This distance element (D) is not available in virtual communication, so we can't really apply the model.

We agree with Park (2008) who stated that:

The computer-mediated communication (CMC) modes impose conversational constraints on language users due principally to the lack of contextual cues.

Park also conducted research on linguistic politeness in virtual communication. It's just that the people involved in the research are people who already know each other. Even with the participants who already knew each other, Park still acknowledged that context is an important element in communication that cannot be found in virtual communication. The communication forum used by Park is a formal communication forum that only gives access to certain people. Meanwhile, YouTube is a large online forum that is free to access by anyone as long as he has a Google account. This means that the people milling about and communicating on YouTube are people who do not know each other or at least cannot be guaranteed that they know each other.

After we have seen how people use positive politeness to express appreciation even though they do not have to be familiar or even know each other, we now see how they use negative politeness to express appreciation which is less frequent than positive politeness.

4.2.2. Appreciating with Negative Politeness

Language speakers use language to achieve a social function. Politeness, both positive and negative, must be seen as a social function. If politeness is a social function of language, then expressions of positive or negative politeness basically carry a will that affects all communicating parties. In this case, a speaker would want the polite attitude he shows through his expression (positively or negatively) to be recognized by the recipient. Regarding the effect that arises as a result of the politeness expressed depends on the polarity and understanding of the recipient.

In virtual communication, the effect we are talking about is not always visible because in general, the video creators do not always reply to visitors' comments due to a large number of comments (even if they read them). Commenters may have understood that their comments were likely not reciprocated; most of the comments are also given only as an expression,

either praise or insult, and so on; some commenters only put comments just as a trace that they have watched the video.

As shown in the table presented earlier, commentators tend to express positive politeness. This can be seen from the percentage value which we can compare with negative politeness.

Commentators generally acted "friendly" in their comments or did not use formal grammar in their comments. They also often do not use the formal address "sir, mistress, miss" and so on. They use expressions that display parallels where social strata are not taken into account. This may be due to the nature of technology and public spaces where social boundaries are faded. We may accept expressions of positive politeness (informality, camaraderie, etc.) as the norm in public virtual communication.

Expressions of negative politeness, on the other hand, are expressions that the commentator deliberately expresses with a specific purpose. Both B&L and Leech agree that negative politeness plays a role in keeping the "negative face" of each other. Negative modesty works to minimize the risk of "losing face" or losing self-esteem. This means that comments containing negative politeness are conveyed so that both the sender and receiver maintain their dignity while communicating. What makes this interesting is that negative politeness is still used even though the element of distance (D) or Absolute Rank (R) cannot be measured in this context. The following are some appreciative comments expressed with negative politeness:

Thank you for your video. I learned a lot about you. I hope you make more useful videos. [C2.7]

Hello sir I am from India and here we are taught British English but many of us went USA for higher study so for exams like SAT we have to study American pronunciation and American vocabulary which is a bit different so I was confused what to study. But now I m clear because of you that English is just one language and we have to focus on any one English . So I will Focus on British English. Thankyou so much. I m learning in these quarantine days. Love and respect from India. [C2.13]

The two comments above differ in size but both are expressions of appreciation. The second commenter did provide a few details which for us are quite relevant to the topic of the video. Both commenters used formal thanks and one even used "sir" in their comments.

The use of formal designations in virtual communications like this, especially in public spaces where profiles of people cannot be "trusted", are quite numerous. However, when compared with the use of informal designations (bro, guy, etc.), the use of formal designations is still rare.

As mentioned earlier, positive politeness may have become the norm in virtual public communication. This means that it is possible for commenters to express positive politeness without feeling familiar or without the slightest polite intent.

In contrast to the use of negative politeness. People who express negative politeness in virtual public spaces are completely conscious and intend to act politely. They do so in order to protect their dignity and those with whom they communicate.

Negative politeness is still outnumbered by the use of the bald strategy. Many commenters used a bald strategy to either "play with the language" or avoid giving straight answers. Others use direct expressions where no polarity of politeness can be applied. However, once again, negative politeness is still outnumbered by all other strategies of linguistic politeness, particularly in public virtual communication.

5. Conclusion

From the above discussion, we conclude that in public virtual communication, all linguistic politeness strategies can be found (positive, negative, and bald). However, expressions that we think carry the value of politeness are not always said with the same meaning. That is, not all expressions of politeness carry out their social functions as discussed in the available models of linguistic politeness so far.

In public virtual communication where social strata or distance (D) and Absolute Rank (R) cannot be measured, politeness values can only be identified and measured through grammar and formality of expressions. In this way, we have found that positive politeness has become the norm in virtual public communication. We can assume this is the result of fading social boundaries in public virtual communication. Therefore, positive politeness no longer functions to create acceptance or an atmosphere of intimacy but has become the norm for strangers to communicate.

As a result, negative politeness is outnumbered by positive and bald politeness. However, this then illustrates that the commenters only really consciously intended to be polite when they used negative politeness. That is, when using negative politeness, they step out of the box and choose to create a formal atmosphere in their communication. This is to keep their "face".

In public virtual communication, it appears that linguistic courtesy is more likely to be "face maintenance" than "communication strategy" to achieve certain communication goals.

Finally, we have to accept the fact that the current models of linguistic politeness still need to be refined so that they can be applied in virtual public communication where important elements of communication are lost (context, distance, etc.).

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