



An Analysis of Politeness Strategies in George W. Bush's Victory Speeches

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Abstract

In communicating, people may express themselves in a particular communication channel, spoken or written. For instance, people may use direct and indirect communication as their message's perceived meaning varies depending on the tone of the messages. As a result, they may apply different levels of politeness. This research investigated politeness strategies used by George W. Bush in his presidential acceptance speeches. The researcher collected the data used in this research from the transcripts of Bush's two victory speeches (2000 and 2004). The analysis based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) classification of politeness strategies. The research findings showed that George W. Bush applied the positive strategy as his most dominant politeness strategies, such as *Pay more attention, give recognition or sympathy to the hearer* and *Offer helps or promises* sub-strategies. This research also revealed the factors affecting Bush's politeness in speaking, among others; social status, interest, and solidarity. However, Bush did not show any unambiguous and disguised manner as he attempted to build the citizens' trust in him.

Keywords: Politeness Strategies, Politeness, Political Speech.

Introduction

As a member of a community, humans need to interact with others. According to Davis (2017), communication is passing information and understanding from one person to another. Allen (1964, as cited in Shaikh, 2012) also said that communication is a bridge of meaning. It contains a process of telling, listening, and also understanding.

Various communication methods must be used to achieve communication goals when forming social connections. Language analysis identifies several social interaction communication strategies, including implicit, indirect, politeness (Gunawan & Aprizawati, 2018). Some general rules, which are being wise, generous, modest, and sympathetic to others, may determine what it means to be polite in social interactions in a specific culture (Yule, 1996). In addition, he said, "In an interaction, politeness is defined as a strategy for demonstrating awareness of other people's faces." (Yule, 2010, p. 135)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the meaning of strategy is a speaker's technique for achieving several objectives, such as creating or maintaining a healthy relationship, where the speaker attempts to not upset the hearer when they communicated in order to preserve a healthy relationship. In order to develop a healthy relationship between the speaker and the hearer, politeness is used in the discussion. In politeness theory, the central concept of this theory is connected to "face," they define "face" as a feeling of self-worth or self-image that every person has about themselves and claim that "people assume of each other's behavior in maintaining face in communication interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

Wijaya (2019) states that in creating good conversation and communication, politeness strategies are fundamental to making the conversation go smoothly and build up nicely. The conversation should be built up well with politeness strategies to ensure the hearer understands what the speaker is talking about and understands the purpose of the conversation.

The speaker could build a good self-image for hearer by using politeness in speaking. Also, being polite to other people means the speaker shows respects and this speaker is aware of the hearer's feelings. By using the politeness strategy in speaking, the speaker also improves their self-worth, boosts some confidence, helps to build feelings of respect towards each other, and strengthens the linkage of the speaker and the hearer. Using politeness may reveal a participant relationships between language users as a value that must exist in using that language. This language needs to be corrected to maintain the relationship between participants of the language even though the literal meaning of the words is applied similarly (Suseno, 1991, as cited in Setiyadi, 2016).

The essence of politeness ought to be exposed to English students since politeness is essential in communication management because it contributes to determining communication skills. Therefore, communicators could earn respect for themselves and others. Students may eventually learn to differentiate between speaking with someone their age or older. Everyone, including politicians, want to have a good self-image in public. A politician's good image often determines how voters may begin to acknowledge them. A

tool that can be applied to influence voters' decisions is the political image. Because of that, it could not be doubted that politicians would use politeness strategies in spoken and written communication in their speeches. Based on the explanation above, the researcher aims to find out what kinds of politeness strategies were used by George W. Bush in his two victory speeches.

Method

This research used a qualitative design to identify politeness strategies in two texts of George W. Bush's victory speeches. This research applied a textual analysis approach because it could come from documents, films, newspapers, paintings, web pages, and others (Smith, 2017). The term "textual analysis" captures various study techniques applied to define, analyze, and comprehend texts. There are several approaches to Textual Analysis, such as Rhetorical Criticism, Content Analysis, Interaction Analysis, and Performance Studies. In order to learn more about the goals, messages, and outcomes of communication content, researchers employ content analysis. They can also conclude the texts they are analyzing. The content analysis could vary given its quantitative or qualitative approach but broadly deals with assessing material in a text (merely counting occurrences or searching for deeper meaning). The subject of this research was The Presidential Victory Speeches of George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004. Then the researcher identifies, analyzes, and explains data based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness strategies. Lastly, the researcher concluded the data.

Results

After analyzing the speeches with Brown and Levinson (1987)'s classification of politeness strategies (1987), the researcher found 28 positive strategies and 7 negative strategies in George W. Bush's two victory speeches (2000 and 2004).

1.1 Positive strategy

Using the positive strategy is to maintain a close relationship. The speaker is trying to show familiarity with the speaker. It uses a metaphorical extension of intimacy between the speaker and the hearer's relationship. From 15 components in positive strategy, this research only found ten components used by George W. Bush in his Victory Speeches, as described below:

1.1.1 Pay more attention, give recognition or sympathy to the hearer.

Extract 1

Bush: "Vice President Gore and I put our hearts and hopes into our campaigns.
Line 3 We both gave it our all. We shared similar emotions, so I understand how difficult this moment must be for Vice President Gore and his family. He has a **distinguished** record of service to our country as a congressman, a senator and a vice president. This evening I received a **gracious call** from the vice president." (VS1/01/PS/PM)

Bush used *Pay more attention, give recognition, or sympathy strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker's words "*distinguished*" and "*gracious*" were done with intensifying modifiers. The speaker gave those words to add emotion to the sentence. In this sentence, Bush talked about his opponent, the previous vice president, Al Gore. With exaggerated intonations, Bush told the audience that Al Gore showed excellent service to the country during his time as vice president. Despite his loss to Bush, Al Gore humbly wanted to call Bush to congratulate him on winning the presidential election.

1.1.2 Amplifying interest to the hearer.

Extract 2

Bush: **"I was not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation.**
 The president of the United States is the president of every single American,
 of every race and every background." (VS1/09/PS/AI)

The speaker used *Amplifying interest to the hearer strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the sentence attempted to increase interest in the conversational contributions by expressing them dramatically. In this sentence, Bush talked about himself dramatically by saying he did not work only for his party but worked for the whole country. Furthermore, being president of America means working for all Americans of every race, ethnicity, and background.

1.1.3 Applying group familiarity markers (using jargon, slang words, or form of greeting).

Extract 3

Bush: "These priorities are not merely Republican concerns or Democratic
 concerns; **they are American responsibilities.**" (VS1/10/PS/GF)

Bush used the *Applying group familiarity markers strategy*. This strategy concerns the form of addresses. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the word "American" was categorized as an address form and used to indicate such in-group membership, encompassing conventional names. Bush utilized the term "American" to declare that the state's concerns were not only the responsibility of political parties but a shared responsibility of all Americans as well.

1.1.4 Find an agreement.

Extract 4

Bush: "I believe things happen for a reason, and I hope the long wait of the last
 five weeks will heighten a desire to move beyond the bitterness and
Line 3 partisanship of the recent past. Our nation must rise above a house divided.
 Americans share hopes and goals and values farmore important than

any political disagreements. Republicans want the best for our nation, and so do Democrats. Our votes may differ, but not our hopes.”
(VS1/12/PS/FA)

Bush utilized *Find an agreement strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker seeks ways in which it was possible to agree with him in lines four, five, and six sentences utilized to corroborate his opinions. In this sentence, Bush showed his agreement by carrying out everyone’s wish that Americans share the same values, and what they share was more important than just political strife. Whereas on the night of Election Day, Democrats, Al Gore’s party, questioned the election results and demanded a recount in Florida counties where they expected good outcomes. Bush said his party and the opposing party wanted the best for their country because they had the same goals to build a better America.

1.1.5 *Assume/raise/assert mutual understanding.*

Extract 5

Bush: “.....**our country has been through a long and trying period**, with the outcome of the presidential election not finalized for longer than any of us could ever imagine.” (VS1/13/PS/AM)

Bush employed *Assume/raise/assert mutual understanding*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker assumes the hearer already knows about certain information. In this sentence, Bush assumes the hearer knew that the country was going through a tough time because the finalization of the election’s results was announced later than scheduled, so the country was going through a long and crucible period. Bush assumed the hearers already knew the information, so he tried to soften up the FTAs or an act that would lead to harm to the hearers’ faces.

1.1.6 *Offer helps or promises.*

Extract 6

Bush: “After a difficult election, **we must put politics behind us and work together to make the promise of America available for every one of our citizens.**” (VS1/14/PS/OP)

Bush utilized *the Offer helps or promises strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker declares that no matter what the hearer wants, the speaker wants it too and may help the hearer to obtain it. In this sentence, the speaker believed that the hearers (Americans) wanted to open America to all citizens. Moreover, in obtaining it, the speaker promises to help. After a brutal election, Bush intended to work with Americans to improve America and leave political problems behind.

1.1.7 *Be optimistic.*

Extract 7

Bush: **"I'm optimistic** that we could change the tone in Washington, D.C."
(VS1/19/PS/BO)

Bush *applied Be optimistic strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker explicitly declared that the hearers would team up with the speaker because it would be in their mutual shared interest. Bush expressed that he was optimistic that together with him, Americans could change Washington D.C., the capital city of the USA, for the better. Furthermore, he was delighted to change the opinion of Washington's citizens that he deserved to be the president because Bush only got less than 9% of voters from his opponent, Al Gore, in Washington, D.C.

1.1.8 *Involving the speakers and the hearers in activities.*

Extract 8

Bush: **"We** agreed to meet early next week in Washington, and **we** agreed to do our best to heal our country after this hard-fought contest."
(VS1/23/PS/SH)

Bush utilized *Involving the speakers and the hearers in activities strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the word "we" is utilized to stress the cooperativeness of the speaker's action, implying "I will do it for our benefit." Bush utilized "we" in this sentence to describe himself and his opponent, Al Gore. Bush tried to engage emotionally with his opponent, Al Gore. In this sentence, Bush and Al Gore agreed to meet in Washington and discuss how to restore the country after a brutal election.

1.1.9 *Assumes or displays the similarity of action.*

Extract 9

Bush: "I'm grateful to the Vice-President and Lynne and their daughters, who have worked so hard and been such a vital part of our team. **The Vice-President serves America with wisdom and honor, and I'm proud to serve beside him.**" (VS2/27/PS/DS)

Bush employed *Assumes or displays the similarity of action strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), the continuation of assistance between the speaker and the hearers may also be alleged or encouraged by giving a declaration of reciprocal rights. Bush employed the word "I'm" to highlight that until now, he is proud to be on the same side as Dick Cheney. Bush also employed the word "him" to point at Cheney as someone close to Bush received the action, which was that Bush showed he was thrilled to work with

someone like Cheney. Bush indicated that his vice president, Dick Cheney, would serve as a vice president who worked with a wise attitude and respect. Moreover, Bush would serve America with wisdom and honor, just like his vice president, Dick Cheney, and he was proud and amazed to work with someone like Dick Cheney.

1.1.10 Give gifts (such as goods, sympathy, attention, and cooperation) to the hearer.

Extract 10

Bush: “Thank you very much. Good evening, my fellow Americans. **I appreciate so very much the opportunity to speak with you tonight.**”
(VS1/28/PS/GG)

Bush employed *Give gifts (such as goods, sympathy, attention, and cooperation) to the hearer strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), gift-giving was not only a tangible gift. It could illustrate many outputs: they want to be liked, adored, cared about, acknowledged, listened to. In this sentence, the speaker employed gift-giving by expressing his gratitude and admiration by delivering his appreciation and understanding towards the support he got from his supporter. He recognized his supporters; because of their consent, he could be elected president to give the acceptance victory speech that night.

2.1 Negative strategy

In showing Negative Face, the speaker usually would not be talking with small talk or using presuppositions. They would speak indirectly and show respect towards the hearer. The speaker would like to start their sentences with apologies to show their differences in social status and lack of familiarity with the hearer. The speaker and the hearer could not avoid awkwardness. From 10 components in negative strategy, this research only found one component used by George W. Bush in his two victory speeches, as described below:

2.1.1 Showing respect.

Extract 11

Bush: “I also salute the **vice president** and his supports for waging a spirited campaign. And I thank him for a call that I know was difficult to make. Laura and I wish the **vice president and Senator Lieberman** and their families the very best.” (VS1/3/NS/SR)

Bush applied *showing respect strategy*. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), in

showing respect in English, they originally had aristocratic connotations such as *Sir, Madam, and Lady*. Nevertheless, in America, it could use with their position and status. In this sentence, Bush shows *respect* by using honorifics to represent his opponent by calling them not by their names but by their current position or status. In this sentence, because Bush's opponent for the election of 2000 was the current Vice President, Al Gore, he addressed his opponent with their current status, which was Vice President, while for Al Gore's partner, Senator Lieberman from Connecticut, Bush addressed him with Senator.

Discussion

The finding reveals that Bush used a positive politeness strategy (Pay more attention, give recognition or sympathy to the hearer). Similar research was conducted in Presidential Addresses by Kalejaiye (2021) and Kusuma (2014), and this research proved that Obama favorably used a positive politeness strategy. Obama expressed a slightly different in employing the positive politeness sub-strategy from Bush, because he used positive strategies to promote harmony and peace with the listeners. He must be more polite when delivering the speech to maintain the audience's goodwill because he knew his audience wanted to be loved, understood, admired, and sympathetic. The purpose of Obama's use of positive strategy was to keep the listeners' best interests in mind, and the speech was polite. George W. Bush also utilized positive politeness most frequently in his two victory speeches; Bush needed the hearer's support as he was the elected president and needed to be liked and trusted by the Americans.

Like George W. Bush, Trump also used positive strategy in his speech. Similarly, Megah (2020), Sibarani (2018), and Hajar (2017) research demonstrated that Trump's chosen politeness strategy was a positive strategy. Trump applied a positive strategy to express concern, sympathy, friendship, and solidarity with candidates and voters, as well as make promises and influence the audience that he would make them happy to support him in the upcoming election or the future. The other reason why Trump applied positive strategies was that these strategies were the best strategy and approach to achieve the attention of other candidates and voters. As a result, the speech covered the distance between the speaker and the listener. Trump gave the impression that they were close. In line with this research, George W. Bush employed the Offer and Promised sub-strategy in both speeches. He promised to work hard and believed Americans wanted a better America where everyone could access it, and he would help to obtain that. He did this by using the idea that he would desire whatever the hearer (i.e., the people of America) wanted and would assist them in obtaining it and thought that by aiding them, he would gain their trust in leading the government. The result of this research has somehow supported advocated the findings discovered by Kalejaiye's (2021), Megah's (2020), Sibarani's (2018), Hajar's (2017), and Kusuma's (2014) research. The researcher discovered positive politeness to be Bush's most dominant strategy. The researcher agreed with previous studies that positive politeness strategy is the best and successful strategy for the presidential speeches. Because with a positive strategy, the speaker and the hearer share knowledge and wants, whereas the speaker sincerely wants the hearer's positive face to be enhanced.

In conclusion, the researcher could note that from the findings, George W. Bush, in both his victory speeches. Bush as the speaker, used positive strategy and negative strategy to respect his audience who came to his Presidential speeches. In other words, George W. Bush did not use bald-on record and off record strategy because Bush was trying to save the hearer's face and attempted not to upset his hearers, so bald-on record and off record strategy could not be applied in his two victory speeches. The findings of this research, in general, were similar to those of previous studies. The use of positive politeness strategies in Bush's presidential address appears to be a common strategy used in presidential address. That is related to the research conducted by Purba (2023), Sari (2016), and Fergina (2015). Furthermore, this research could strengthen the previous research.

After knowing from the previous paragraphs that positive strategies were the most used by George W. Bush in his speeches, this research shows that positive strategy is also helpful in spoken language, whether in the classroom used by the teacher and students or out of the classroom among students. Remaining polite but developing closeness between students and students as well as students and teachers is something that students could use in their communication management to create a peaceful and harmonious relationship with others.

Conclusion

According to the research, the results of this research is that Bush used politeness strategies in his speeches to show the audience that he had good leadership as the elected president—using politeness strategies in his speeches was very important for Bush because he tried to be polite and friendly. It would earn him the admiration and respect of all Americans, including his political opponents. He tried to show his admiration towards the audiences who listened to his speeches and wanted his reputation to be desirable to the hearers. George W. Bush only used a few negative strategies because, with the negative strategy, Bush attempted to give some social distance towards the hearers he was unfamiliar with. Considering their different statuses, that was why Bush used the negative strategy. Unlike the positive strategy, where the essence is 'familiarity,' the negative strategy minimizes the imposition that could upset the hearer 'face,' so the speaker would try to avoid upsetting the hearer 'face.' While being president, Bush must embrace all his people regardless of social status or race, so he could not use a negative strategy that much to keep his 'familiarity' with the hearer. That is why George W. Bush used the positive strategy a lot.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that other researchers attracted to the research politeness strategy use longer speech as the research subject. Furthermore, the researchers also needed to master the politeness strategies materials. Furthermore, researchers could use other politeness theories besides Brown and Levinson (1987), such as Abdul Chaer, Pranowo, Robin Lakoff, and others' linguistics. Secondly, politeness is not only in speech but in everyday life. Other researchers could take other data sources, such

as; everyday conversation, newspapers, letters, grammar texts, or others aside from speeches. Thirdly, this research could show how politicians should represent themselves when speaking in front of people because by using politeness strategies, a politician could shape their positive image while speaking in front of citizens. A good image is considered essential to win people's voices. The researcher recommends that politicians who need to talk in front of people master politeness strategies. Using politeness strategies would give off the image of giving the hearers a positive face and being respected by the hearers. In line with the context of this research, students are suggested to use politeness strategies in their everyday life. Using politeness may encourage a respectful attitude and help us create positive first impressions of ourselves and the people we serve. Being polite means being conscious and respectful toward the impressions of others. Politeness could develop students' relationships with others, help construct respect, raise student confidence and self-belief, and improve students' communication skills. The researcher wishes this research would be beneficial and helpful and contribute to understanding future researchers interested in politeness strategies. People should apply politeness strategies in everyday life.

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