



Does Social Status Affect the Politeness Strategies? (Politeness Analysis in Sefeo English Community Podcasts)

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Abstract

SEFEO is an abbreviation of one of the most influential English communities in Indonesia, Share English for Everything Community which was established in 2012 by Zelky Yusuf as the founder and runs until now. SEFEO has a different system for running routine English activities including the figures commonly called SEFEO stars consisting of international students and students who have extraordinary appeal in terms of appearance, popularity in their daily lives, and English language skills. This study, in addition to intending to explain theoretically the existence of elements of politeness theory in conversations in one of the SEFEO English community podcasts. The researcher tries to find the possibility of social factors occurring in the SEFEO English community. Politeness strategies consist of a few principles including off-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald on record According to Brown and Levinson (1978). The researcher chose a qualitative content analysis research method. The researcher took a sample of a podcast entitled "Passion" which was narrated by Robin and Jack and a sample of a podcast entitled "Our Experiences in Learning English" which was narrated by Zelky Yusuf (the owner) and Zulfani. The researcher managed to find a relationship between politeness strategies and a person's social status in the community, including in the podcast entitled "Passion" hosted by Robin and Jack. It turns out that the interaction between the two did not show a significant gap because their status was equally respected in society Meanwhile, the interaction between the president directly and the members who are considered ordinary in the podcast entitled "Our Experiences in Learning English" shows a politeness phenomenon where because of the indication of closeness between the two, the result is that their interaction process is very casual and does not significantly show the gap between the two because one has a higher position in the community environment.

Keywords: *Analysis, social status, politeness strategies*

Introduction

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness in communication serves to reduce potential threats to an individual's "face", which they define as the public self-image a person seeks to maintain in social interactions. They propose four principal types of politeness strategies, namely: bald on-record, which involves direct and unmitigated speech; positive politeness, which expresses solidarity and approval toward the interlocutor; negative politeness, which conveys deference and aims to minimize imposition; and off-record strategies, which are indirect and often deliberately ambiguous.

The choice of strategy, according to Brown and Levinson, is influenced by several contextual social variables, including relative power between speakers, social distance, and the degree of imposition involved in the communicative act. Bald On-Record is characterized by direct and explicit communication without any effort to mitigate the potential threat to the interlocutor's face. It is primarily employed to ensure efficiency or clarity, often in contexts where the relationship between speakers is close or when urgency is paramount. For example, a straightforward command such as "Close the door!" exemplifies this strategy.

Positive Politeness involves expressing concern and friendliness to address the interlocutor's positive face needs—that is, their desire to be appreciated, liked, or regarded as important. The aim is to foster closeness and solidarity between speakers. An illustrative example is the phrase, "Please close the door, okay? It makes the room warmer, doesn't it?" Negative Politeness is marked by respect for the interlocutor's autonomy and personal space, deliberately avoiding imposition or forcefulness. Its primary goal is to minimize any potential burden or pressure on the addressee, thereby preserving their negative face—their wish to remain unimpeded and free from interruption.

For instance, the expression "Sorry to interrupt, but could I please close the door?" demonstrates this strategy. Off-Record utilizes indirect and often ambiguous language, allowing the speaker's intention to be interpreted or ignored according to the interlocutor's discretion. The objective is to circumvent direct confrontation, providing the hearer with the opportunity to infer the speaker's meaning autonomously. An example of this would be stating, "It's cold in this room, isn't it?" which implicitly suggests the request to close the door.

The SEFEO Community is an English language learning community founded in 2012, initially operating through the Facebook social media platform. It was established by Zelky Yusuf, an Indonesian national from Aceh, driven by a strong passion for the English language. His primary aim was to channel this enthusiasm into supporting fellow Indonesians in learning English and to provide structured opportunities for speaking practice based on a predetermined schedule. At its inception, SEFEO focused on offering speaking sessions and grammar-oriented learning materials via its official Facebook page.

However, in 2021, the community discontinued its activities on Facebook and transitioned to other social media platforms, including WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, beginning in 2022. One of the core activities—actively attended by the researcher—was a daily speaking class, typically conducted through WhatsApp group calls held in the evenings. In terms of financial participation, the founder introduced a monthly fee of 50,000 Indonesian Rupiah for beginner and advanced-level participants, while intermediate-level learners were granted free access to encourage broader participation and inclusivity.

Unlike most English learning communities, SEFEO features a number of prominent figures who serve as representatives of the community and attract substantial engagement on platforms such as TikTok—garnering thousands of likes and hundreds of comments. These individuals are particularly admired by younger audiences, largely due to their exceptional personal appeal, which combines both physical presence and strong proficiency in English. In light of this, the researcher seeks to examine the phenomenon of politeness from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on one of SEFEO's podcasts that features both these well-known figures and more typical members of the community.

The article entitled "An Analysis of Politeness Strategies Used by Teacher and Students in English Class at SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri", authored by Lailatul Mukharomah and Ossa Bodhi Tala Sumanto, investigates how politeness strategies are employed within English language classrooms. The study, conducted in a 7th-grade class at SMPN 1 Mojo Kediri, adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected from video recordings of two class sessions and analyzed using Geoffrey Leech's (1983) framework of politeness maxims, which include tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy.

The analysis showed that the teacher utilized all six maxims in classroom interactions, while the students applied only four—tact, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. In total, 132 utterances were examined, with 92 spoken by the teacher and 40 by the students. Among these, the agreement maxim emerged as the most frequently used, reflecting a pattern of mutual affirmation and cooperation between teachers and learners. The teacher was particularly inclined to use approbation and tact to encourage a respectful and encouraging learning atmosphere.

Students, on the other hand, predominantly used agreement as a form of response to the teacher's directives. Examples include the teacher's polite request, "Sit down, please," illustrating tact, and "How are you today?" indicating sympathy. Meanwhile, a student's utterance like, "Excuse me, Ma'am, may I ask a question?" also reflects tact. Ultimately, the study underscores the significance of politeness in shaping a constructive classroom environment. It emphasizes the teacher's role in modeling courteous behavior, which students tend to emulate to a certain degree.

The authors recommend that politeness strategies be consistently fostered in educational contexts, as they contribute not only to effective communication but also to students' character development.

The article titled "The Politeness Strategies: Male and Female Politeness Strategies in a Group Discussion" by Helena Verusha Ali explores the gender-based use of politeness strategies within group discussions. Utilizing a qualitative method, the study involved five participants—two women and three men—ranging in age from 30 to 40 years and representing diverse social, professional, and ethnic backgrounds. A deliberately controversial topic was selected to encourage the emergence of various Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) and corresponding politeness behaviors.

Findings indicate that female participants most frequently employed FTAs such as criticism, complaints, emotional expression, and warnings—forms generally associated with lower politeness levels. They were less likely to apply strategies that protect the listener's face. In contrast, male participants tended to use FTAs such as confessions and admissions, which reflected a more considerate approach. Positive politeness was the dominant strategy among male speakers, followed by bald-on-record and off-record expressions.

Interestingly, the study also found that interpersonal closeness influenced the application of politeness in ways that diverged from earlier research. Contrary to traditional assumptions, the women in this study demonstrated less polite behavior than the men. This divergence was attributed to the specific emotional and relational dynamics within the group. In conclusion, the study underscores that politeness strategies are shaped not only by gender but also by the nature of social relationships. While women in this context favored more open and emotionally driven speech, men adopted more tactful and supportive approaches. These insights highlight the importance of recognizing such variations when facilitating group communication and designing communication training programs.

The rationale for applying the politeness strategies framework to the analysis of the community's podcast content stems from the observable phenomenon of admiration directed toward certain prominent figures within the SEFEO Community. These individuals are perceived not only as highly competent in their respective areas but also as possessing notable physical appeal. Consequently, both newly joined participants and long-standing members demonstrate heightened interest in engaging with and exploring the various activities offered by the community.

Community leaders frequently facilitate exclusive interaction sessions between selected newcomers and these well-recognized figures, intentionally designed to increase members' enthusiasm and sustained participation in the community's regular programs. The researcher, having actively participated in several of these special sessions alongside the so-called community "stars," also observed a compelling social dynamic emerging from interactions between these

admired individuals and newer members.

This phenomenon is documented in publicly available YouTube content, which serves as concrete evidence of such interactions. In addition to the influence exerted by these prominent individuals, the community leaders themselves play a crucial role in fostering a sense of trust, engagement, and commitment among members. More broadly, the founder is regarded as having successfully cultivated a learning environment distinguished by its unique qualities and strengths—features that set the SEFEO Community apart from other English language learning communities.

Therefore, the author aims to seek further documentary evidence, particularly from available YouTube content. The author is particularly interested in analyzing the linguistic style and word choices employed both from the admired figures to one another and from general members to these prominent individuals and analyzing the utterances delivered by the speakers through the lens of politeness strategies before categorizing them, accompanied by supporting arguments to substantiate the researcher's interpretations.

Method

Research Design

The research method employed in this study is qualitative content analysis, which emphasizes the identification and interpretation of patterns, themes, and meanings within verbal or textual data. This methodological approach enables the researcher to examine the presence and significance of specific words, themes, or concepts in a systematic and contextually grounded manner. As noted by Haggarty (1996), "Content analysis is a research method that helps systematically and reliably analyze qualitative data to be generalized according to the categories of interest to the researcher."

The data collection procedure commenced with the selection of a video podcast featured on the official YouTube channel of SEFEO as the primary source. The researcher intentionally selected a video with the highest number of viewers in order to provide a stronger basis for examining the relationship between social status and the politeness strategies employed within the interaction. The English subtitles embedded in the video were transcribed into a written script through a website that provides services for converting video subtitles into written scripts. to facilitate a more systematic and comprehensive analysis.

Before initiating the analysis, the researcher confirmed the public accessibility of the selected content and, where applicable, sought appropriate permissions in accordance with established ethical standards governing the use of publicly available digital media in scholarly research. Subsequently, lexical items were meticulously selected for examination based on their potential relevance to various types of politeness strategies.

Each selected expression was categorized according to the most appropriate politeness strategy, as outlined in the theoretical framework. In order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the research findings, inter-rater reliability procedures were implemented by engaging an independent evaluator to cross-check the categorization of politeness strategies. Moreover, member checking was carried out by seeking validation from individuals with contextual familiarity with the community, thereby ensuring the interpretive accuracy and analytical credibility of the results.

Furthermore, the researcher provided in-depth justifications for each categorization, articulating the rationale behind the selection of specific types of politeness strategies with scholarly precision. The theory of politeness strategies will be implemented by identifying prominent utterances that are closely related to politeness strategies. Each selected utterance will then be analyzed to determine the appropriate type of politeness strategy, accompanied by a clear rationale for the researcher's choice.

The justification will be supported by analytical findings and aligned with the characteristics of the selected politeness strategy category. Each selected utterance was examined to reveal specific elements relevant to the analysis of politeness strategies, including their corresponding categories. Furthermore, each identified category of politeness strategy was also assessed based on the degree of linguistic formality employed by the speakers, as well as the clarity and conciseness with which the speakers conveyed the intended message or main point of the conversation.

The level of linguistic politeness can also be observed through the frequency of slang usage, the types of modal verbs employed throughout the conversation, and the extent to which support and appreciation are expressed verbally in response to the interlocutor's statements. Robin is widely recognized as a popular figure, not only within the community but also in his personal life, as conveyed in the podcast. He serves as a central icon in the community—not only is he highly proficient in English, but he is also considered to possess remarkable charm and appeal, which has successfully drawn the interest of many individuals outside the community to join.

Jack, a long-time friend of Robin since high school, also enjoyed exceptional popularity during his school years. He was known for leading the technology extracurricular club, which later led him to become a private jet pilot at a young age. Zelky Yusuf is the leader and founder of the SEFEO community, a platform filled with creativity, uniqueness, and potential. As a leader, he demonstrates strong English language skills and an unwavering enthusiasm for continuously developing the community. Zulfani is one of SEFEO's active members, although he is relatively unknown to the public, as he typically operates behind the scenes.

The podcast titled "Passion" is hosted by two speakers, Robin and Jack. In one segment of the podcast, Robin expresses the challenges he faces as a popular and respected figure. Similarly, Jack, who was once the leader of an extracurricular organization during high school, shares his own difficulties. However, Jack focuses more on his struggle to discover his identity in relation to his passion rather than on meeting social expectations. The writer aims to explore linguistic phenomena through their interactions, which can be analyzed using the theory of politeness strategies. Both speakers possess notable public reputations, which adds a unique layer to their communication. The way they convey their messages may carry tones of familiarity, as between close acquaintances, or alternatively, adopt more formal nuances. Thus, their social status and reputation may unconsciously influence the application of politeness strategies in significant ways.

The podcast titled "Our Experiences in Learning English" is hosted by the community leader, Zelky Yusuf, and a casual member named Zulpani. Although both speakers share their individual challenges in learning English, the choice of utterances related to politeness strategies throughout the podcast may significantly reflect their respective social statuses—or, conversely, may contradict such assumptions. The application of politeness strategies serves as an effective tool for identifying the linguistic choices made by the speakers, while simultaneously addressing the central phenomenon that still requires empirical validation in relation to the podcast's title.

1. Samples

The first sample selected for analysis is the most viewed podcast from the SEFEO English Community's YouTube channel, entitled "Passion", featuring two speakers, Robin and Jack.

Datum 1

Minutes: 0:01 – 0:05

Robin: "Hey everybody and welcome back to the podcast and today's episode I got a chat with one of my good friends Jack"

Type of Politeness Strategies: Bald on record

Datum 2

Minutes: 0:09 – 0:13

Robin: "What quantifies success and how to alleviate some of the pressures teenagers face in their everyday life."

Type of politeness strategies: Negative politeness

Datum 3

04:40 – 04:45

Robin: "one point he was he wanted to be a nurse and then now into you know

flying planes which i'd like to"

Datum 4

1:18 – 1:25

Jack: "sure, so uh... I'm Jack and I'm a pilot, I fly as a private pilot now and I'm looking to go into commercial aviation"

Type of politeness: Off Record

Datum 5

13:31 - 13:45

Jack: "my dad mainly because he's like a whole research nerd um was like okay like i took your interests and whatever and kind of like your history and whatever and you know these are some things that I found and i encourage you to take this and then go do your own research."

Type of Politeness: bald on record

Datum 6

27:43 – 28:07

Robin : "yeah and finding a place where i feel as though i belong in a place where people um want me for who i am not what they don't want me just for either status um or or i guess what i stand for because on campus i'm very well known for you know being there for for a lot of people and doing my stuff yeah with camera i wouldn't i i hate like that term popular because it's like a very kind of subjective thing.

Type of Politeness: bald on record

The subsequent podcast selected from the SEFEO English Community's YouTube channel is entitled "Our Experiences in Learning English", featuring Zelky, the founder of the community, and Zulfani, a regular member.

Datum 1

0:09 – 0:14

Mr. Zelky: "i'm with my very good friend he is Zulfani always can you please introduce yourself first?"

Type of Politeness Strategies: Bald on record

Datum 3

3:27 – 4:00

Zulpani: "uh when I was in center high school i learned english is just from uh woods movie so when i watch that movie i look at that uh people on movie uh they they are look so cool when they are speaking english so um i'll i'll try to imitate what the people say on movie and i'll try once again after the day yeah uh yeah it's

made me um addicted”.

Type of politeness strategies: off record

Datum 4

09:54 – 10:14

Mr. Zelky : “i really love psychology i really love psychology but unfortunately that psychology did the exist i mean that major didn't exist in my college so so i took english education to even do that um not interest being a teacher because, but i only love the language you know.”

Type of politeness strategies: bald on record

Datum 5

14:56 – 15:03

Zulpani “yes uh free when i'm uh back from my uh office”

Type of politeness strategies: bald on record

2. Source of Data

The researcher is an active member of the SEFEO English Community, a platform that primarily focuses on developing speaking skills, initially through video podcast content published on YouTube in 2022, and later through WhatsApp group calls beginning in 2024 and continuing to the present.

The data samples selected for this study consist of podcast episodes uploaded to the official YouTube channel of the SEFEO English Community. These were preferred over the WhatsApp-based interactions due to their accessibility and ease of transcription. The video podcasts provided clearly articulated speech and accompanying subtitles, allowing for more accurate conversion into textual data suitable for analysis within the framework of politeness strategies.

3. Technique of Collecting Data

The data collection process began with the selection of a podcast video uploaded to the official YouTube channel of the SEFEO English Community. Upon identifying the most relevant video for the study, the researcher transcribed the available subtitles into textual form to facilitate the identification and extraction of data samples for analysis. The researcher then examined the transcribed content to identify elements of politeness strategies embedded within the utterances featured in the selected podcast.

After identifying the types of politeness strategies present in the selected quotation fragments, the researcher incorporated these fragments into the analysis to examine them through several key elements. This includes determining the most appropriate type of politeness strategy for each quotation and providing a rationale for the researcher's selection of the specific strategy, along with the underlying factors that guided the application of the politeness strategies framework in the

analysis.

4. Technique of Data Analysis

After successfully collecting podcast data deemed suitable for analysis through the politeness strategies framework, the researcher proceeded to implement a series of analytical steps to categorize the types of politeness strategies observed. These steps include the following:

1. The researcher identifies specific quotation fragments in which the speakers' utterances demonstrate a strong relevance to the principles of the politeness strategies framework.
2. Upon identifying relevant quotation fragments, the researcher determines the most appropriate type of politeness strategy—namely, off-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, or bald on-record—to be applied in the analysis of each utterance.
3. The researcher includes the specific time markers—such as hours, minutes, and seconds—corresponding to each utterance. This ensures clear identification of the utterance boundaries and allows for a more precise and detailed analysis.
4. The researcher provides well-founded justifications for categorizing each quotation under one of the four types of politeness strategies—off-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, or bald on-record—based on the linguistic features and contextual factors present in the utterance.

Results

The first sample selected for analysis is the most viewed podcast from the SEFEO English Community's YouTube channel, entitled "Passion", featuring two speakers, Robin and Jack.

Datum 1

Minutes: 0:01 – 0:05

Robin: "Hey everybody and welcome back to the podcast and today's episode I got a chat with one of my good friends Jack"

Type of Politeness Strategies: bald on record

Argument: Robin's utterance demonstrates the use of a bald on-record politeness strategy, characterized by its clarity, directness, and absence of mitigative language.

In his role as the podcast host, Robin occupies a position of conversational authority, which enables him to convey information plainly without employing face-saving mechanisms. The primary function of this utterance is to introduce the guest, Jack, at the beginning of the episode. While the tone remains cordial, it does not incorporate linguistic features typically associated with deference, indirectness, or the expression of solidarity—elements often found in positive politeness strategies.

Although the overarching theme of the podcast addresses complex and potentially face-sensitive issues—such as personal development, identity formation, and societal expectations—this specific utterance is neutral in its intent. It neither imposes on the listener's autonomy nor demands emotional engagement. Rather, it serves as a brief and context-setting statement, free from evaluative language or persuasive intent. Robin refrains from encouraging the audience to form any particular judgment about Jack or fostering relational closeness through additional elaboration. As such, the utterance aligns with the core characteristics of a bald on-record strategy, particularly within a low-risk communicative context where clarity and efficiency are prioritized over interpersonal sensitivity.

Datum 2

Minutes: 0:09 – 0:13

Robin: "What quantifies success and how to alleviate some of the pressures teenagers face in their everyday life."

Type of politeness strategies: negative politeness

Argument: Robin's statement particularly the use of the phrase "pressures teenagers face" demonstrates the application of a negative politeness strategy, as it tactfully acknowledges the potential sensitivities of the audience without imposing direct judgments or authoritative claims. Within the broader context of a discussion on success and societal expectations, this expression functions to recognize the psychological and situational constraints experienced by teenagers in their daily lives.

In doing so, it reflects a conscious effort to preserve the negative face of the interlocutor, defined as the individual's right to autonomy and freedom from imposition. Rather than adopting a confrontational or prescriptive tone, Robin presents the issue in a manner that sustains respectful social distance and encourages introspection. The utterance is notably devoid of assertive or evaluative language, aligning with the indirect and respectful characteristics of negative politeness.

By emphasizing systemic or external pressures instead of attributing blame to personal failings, Robin redirects the focus from individual responsibility to broader social realities. This discursive approach effectively minimizes the threat to the listener's face, particularly in a context involving adolescents who may be highly receptive to perceived judgment. Consequently, the utterance reflects a

tactful, non-imposition communicative style that is consistent with the principles of negative politeness as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Datum 3

04:40 – 04:45

Robin: “one point he was he wanted to be a nurse and then now into you know flying planes which i'd like to”

Type of politeness strategies: positive politeness

Argument: Robin's utterance illustrates the application of positive politeness, most notably through the concluding phrase “which I'd like to”, which implicitly conveys admiration and a sense of affinity. While the earlier part of the exchange between Robin and Jack appears informal, Robin's final remark introduces an element of personal appreciation and shared interest in Jack's career progression—particularly his aspiration to become a pilot.

Through this expression of alignment, Robin not only validates Jack's choice but also reinforces a sense of camaraderie and mutual regard. Such an utterance contributes to the enhancement of Jack's positive face, understood as the individual's desire to be accepted, appreciated, and recognized. Rather than maintaining an emotionally neutral or evaluative stance, Robin deliberately communicates approval and respect, which may function as a form of interpersonal affirmation.

This use of language reflects a strategic attempt to minimize social distance and promote relational closeness—core features of positive politeness, as outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987). Consequently, the utterance demonstrates a conscious effort to foster rapport, indicating that Robin not only acknowledges Jack's personal aspirations but also aligns himself with them, thereby strengthening social cohesion within the interaction.

Datum 4

1:18 – 1:25

Jack: “sure, so uh... I'm Jack and I'm a pilot, I fly as a private pilot now and I'm looking to go into commercial aviation”

Type of politeness: Off Record

Argument: Jack's self-introduction reflects the use of an off-record politeness strategy, as the information is conveyed in a manner that is indirect, broadly framed, and free from overt face-threatening elements. In response to Robin's prompt, Jack presents himself in a coherent and relatively formal way, deliberately avoiding language that would be perceived as overly casual or intimate.

Although introductory remarks typically follow a conventional structure and may not directly address the interlocutor's face wants—such as autonomy, sensitivity, or the desire for approval—Jack's lexical choices indicate an awareness of the wider audience and the formality required by the podcast's public setting. By

avoiding assertive or evaluative language, and instead opting for a neutral and factual description of his professional background, Jack enables listeners to engage with the content without feeling any pressure or obligation to respond in a particular way. His introduction does not seek affirmation, express solidarity, or impose expectations upon the audience.

This subtle and indirect communicative style corresponds with the core features of off-record politeness, which emphasizes implication, understatement, and non-imposition. Within the context of a publicly accessible podcast—particularly one targeting a diverse audience such as that of the SEFEO English Community—such a strategy helps preserve social distance while maintaining a tone of respect and discretion.

Datum 5

13:31 - 13:45

Jack: “my dad mainly because he's like a whole research nerd um was like okay like i took your interests and whatever and kind of like your history and whatever and you know these are some things that I found and i encourage you to take this and then go do your own research.”

Type of Politeness: bald on record

Argument: Jack’s statement exemplifies the use of a bald on-record politeness strategy, as the message is delivered in a direct and unmoderated manner, without the inclusion of mitigating expressions or linguistic softeners. His use of informal language—most notably the slang term “nerd”—illustrates a plain and unembellished communication style commonly associated with interactions among social equals. Rather than employing language that elevates or idealizes his father’s role, Jack deliberately opts for an informal tone, prioritizing relatability and down-to-earth expression over formality or status assertion.

This intentional informality indicates an effort to diminish any perceived hierarchical implications linked to his family background. By describing his father in light, colloquial terms, Jack distances himself from self-promotion, despite having earlier introduced himself as a pilot. The lack of honorifics or formal markers further reinforces the categorization of this utterance as bald on-record, wherein the speaker favors directness and transparency over strategies that preserve or enhance social face. In this context, Jack’s utterance promotes an egalitarian tone, underscoring a communication style that values authenticity and efficiency over deference or rhetorical refinement.

Datum 6

27:43 – 28:07

Robin : “yeah and finding a place where i feel as though i belong in a place where people um want me for who i am not what they don't want me just for either status um or or i guess what i stand for because on campus i'm very well known

for you know being there for for a lot of people and doing my stuff yeah with camera i wouldn't i i hate like that term popular because it's like a very kind of subjective thing.

Type of Politeness: bald on record

Argument: Robin elaborated on the personal impact of pursuing one's passion by recounting his own experience of being perceived as a popular figure due to his social status and academic achievements during his time on campus. He expressed the need for companionship with someone who could accept him authentically, beyond public recognition.

This personal reflection was shared specifically with Jack in a casual and intimate manner, suggesting that Robin was not actively concerned with preserving Jack's face needs—such as maintaining respect, social distance, or autonomy in the reception of information—as defined within the framework of politeness theory. The informality of the exchange can also be attributed to the longstanding friendship between the two speakers, which fosters a high level of familiarity and trust. As a result, despite the potentially sensitive nature of the topic being discussed, Robin delivered his narrative in a spontaneous and emotionally driven way, with greater emphasis on personal expression rather than strategic face management. This context supports the notion that the speaker prioritized authentic emotional sharing over adherence to conventional politeness norms.

Datum 7

20:58 – 21:12

Robin: "that you're also the head tech guy at school which um we just got a brand new multi-million-dollar theater build at our school 15 million yeah 18-million-dollar theater built in our school which we're incredibly blessed and it's a beautiful theater it is fantastic yeah it's called the forum."

Type of politeness strategies: positive politeness

Argument: Robin's statement demonstrates the use of a positive politeness strategy, as it explicitly recognizes and affirms Jack's esteemed role and contributions within their academic setting. By identifying Jack as "the head tech guy at school" and associating him with the successful realization of a high-value project namely, the construction of an eighteen-million-dollar theater—Robin publicly affirms Jack's competence and the importance of his position. This expression of recognition functions to uphold Jack's positive face, defined as the individual's desire to be acknowledged, admired, and regarded as socially significant.

Moreover, the enthusiastic and appreciative tone of Robin's utterance serves to enhance interpersonal connection and reinforce a sense of camaraderie between the interlocutors. Rather than delivering a detached or neutral commentary, Robin frames Jack's involvement in a manner that conveys genuine approval and shared pride. This aligns with the core principles of positive politeness, which aim to reduce social distance and foster mutual recognition through expressions of

affirmation and appreciation, as articulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). In this context, Robin's utterance performs more than a descriptive function it acts as a relational move that strengthens social bonds and elevates Jack's status within the conversation in a favorable and affirming manner.

The subsequent podcast selected from the SEFEO English Community's YouTube channel is entitled "Our Experiences in Learning English", featuring Zelky, the founder of the community, and Zulfani, a regular member.

Datum 1

0:09 – 0:14

Mr. Zelky: "i'm with my very good friend he is Zulfani always. Can you please introduce yourself first?"

Type of Politeness Strategies: Bald on record

Argument: Mr. Zelky's utterance reflects the use of a bald on-record politeness strategy, as he introduces the interviewee, Zulfani, and proceeds with a direct, unmitigated request: "Can you please introduce yourself first?" The statement is delivered without the use of indirect cues, hedging expressions, or elaborate face-saving mechanisms, thereby exemplifying a communication style that emphasizes clarity, immediacy, and functional intent.

While the word "please" adds a minimal layer of courtesy, the request itself remains unadorned and transparent, consistent with the characteristics of bald on-record strategies, particularly within contexts of low social risk or minimal imposition. Moreover, Mr. Zelky's informal tone and relaxed manner of speech—despite his position as the founder and leader of the community—suggest an intentional reduction of perceived power distance between himself and the interviewee.

By adopting a casual and approachable communicative style when addressing Zulfani, a regular member, Mr. Zelky cultivates an atmosphere of familiarity and inclusivity rather than asserting hierarchical authority. This strategic informality indicates that the interaction is shaped by mutual familiarity, where concern for face-threatening acts is minimal. As a result, the utterance serves as a clear example of bald on-record politeness operating within a context of social equality and interpersonal ease, thereby reinforcing the solidarity between the two participants.

Datum 2

0:27 – 0:24

Zulpani : "is it right?"

Type of politeness strategies: bald on record

Argument: Zulpani's succinct utterance, "Is it right?", reflects the use of a bald on-record politeness strategy, as it is delivered in a direct and unmodified form, without the inclusion of hedging devices or linguistic softeners. Although the phrase itself may appear formally structured, the tone and spontaneity of delivery

convey an informal and unreserved manner of speaking. This underscores a communicative approach that privileges clarity and straightforwardness over strategic politeness or hierarchical sensitivity. The absence of overt deference, coupled with the brevity of the utterance, implies a close and familiar relationship between Zulpani and Mr. Zelky, the community's founder.

Instead of adopting a formally respectful tone in response to a higher-status interlocutor, Zulpani communicates in a way that reflects mutual recognition and a shared sense of ease. This interaction suggests that within the SEFEO community, social hierarchies—such as distinctions between leadership and general members—do not significantly influence the communicative behavior of participants. The employment of a bald on-record strategy in this context highlights the minimal social distance between the speakers and reinforces a relational atmosphere defined by openness, trust, and collegiality.

Datum 3

3:27 – 4:00

Zulpani : “uh when I was in center high school i learned english is just from uh woods movie so when i watch that movie i look at that uh people on movie uh they they are look so cool when they are speaking english so um i'll i'll try to imitate what the people say on movie and i'll try once again after the day yeah uh yeah it's made me um addicted”.

Type of politeness strategies: off record

Argument: Zulpani's utterance demonstrates the use of an off-record politeness strategy, as he communicates his message through an indirect, story-based response rather than through explicit statements or direct requests. Although his phrasing appears casual on the surface, the overall context and delivery suggest a more complex communicative purpose. When responding to the founder's informal question about his interest in learning English, Zulpani chooses to narrate a personal experience—describing how watching English-language films influenced his early language development.

Instead of providing a succinct or straightforward reply, he offers a detailed reflection that subtly encourages empathy and emotional engagement from the listener. This indirect approach aligns with the principles of off-record politeness, as it avoids placing overt demands or expectations on the audience. Instead, it invites interpretation and allows listeners to construct meaning from the narrative themselves. Given that Zulpani shares personal and emotionally resonant content—such as his motivations and formative experiences—his utterance may also be viewed as an implicit appeal for recognition and affirmation, both from Mr. Zelky and the wider audience. By articulating his thoughts in a humble and non-confrontational tone, he reduces the likelihood of face-threatening acts and safeguards his vulnerability.

This approach reflects a common strategy in discussions involving sensitive or personal subject matter, wherein speakers seek understanding without direct imposition. Accordingly, Zulpani's response exemplifies off-record politeness, characterized by its reliance on suggestion, nuance, and self-disclosure rather than explicitness.

Datum 4

09:54 – 10:14

Mr. Zelky : "i really love psychology i really love psychology but unfortunately that psychology did the exist i mean that major didn't exist in my college so so i took english education to even do that um not interest being a teacher because, but i only love the language you know."

Type of politeness strategies: bald on record

Argument: Although the speaker—who also serves as the founder—explicitly stated his reason for enrolling in the English Education department, the delivery of his utterance was notably relaxed, informal, and even included a brief chuckle during the conversation. This manner of speaking indicates that the primary communicative goal was not to preserve the interlocutor's face wants, such as autonomy, respect, or the desire to feel appreciated. Instead, the speaker adopted a bald on-record strategy, prioritizing openness and spontaneity over politeness conventions or face mitigation techniques.

The absence of strategic linguistic elements—such as hedging, honorifics, or deferential intonation—demonstrates that the speaker did not attempt to cushion the impact of his admission, nor did he modify his message to minimize potential face-threatening implications. His casual tone and transparent explanation of personal academic choices reflect a communicative environment characterized by low social risk and high interpersonal familiarity, where the speaker perceives no need to soften or manage the listener's perception.

This approach aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, in which bald on-record strategies are commonly used in interactions among close acquaintances or in contexts where face threat is minimal. Thus, the utterance can be interpreted not only as a straightforward expression of personal experience but also as a rhetorical move that emphasizes authenticity and egalitarianism over social decorum or formality.

Datum 5

14:56 – 15:03

Zulpani "yes uh free when i'm uh back from my uh office"

Type of politeness strategies: bald on record

Argument: Zulpani's response, "yes uh free when I'm uh back from my uh office," clearly exemplifies a bald on-record politeness strategy, as it is delivered in a direct, unembellished manner without the use of hedging, honorifics, or linguistic

softeners. His reply bypasses conventional grammatical structures typically found in standard English responses (e.g., "Yes, I am free after I return from the office") and instead prioritizes efficiency and immediacy. This type of construction marked by casual diction, the absence of auxiliary verbs, and verbal fillers reflects a communicative style common in peer-to-peer informal interactions where the need to preserve face or maintain hierarchical distance is minimal.

Moreover, Zulpani's tone lacks any markers of deference or formality, further reinforcing the informality and low-risk nature of the exchange. The speaker appears unconcerned with managing the interlocutor's face wants (such as respect, autonomy, or social distance), suggesting that the interpersonal relationship between Zulpani and Mr. Zelky is grounded in mutual familiarity and equality. In such a context, the use of a bald on-record strategy serves not only to convey information efficiently but also to reflect and reinforce the solidarity between participants.

Therefore, this utterance illustrates a deliberate choice to prioritize clarity and directness over social formality, in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) characterization of bald on-record politeness as most appropriate in contexts involving close relationships, minimal threat to face, and an assumption of shared understanding.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion from the Does Social Statuses Affect the Politeness Strategies (Politeness Analysis in SEFEO English Community Podcasts) the researcher found the relationship between social status and politeness strategies in the first podcast entitled "Passion" hosted by Robin and Jack where both are quite respected figures both in the community and in everyday life such as in minutes 20:58 - 21:12 Robin validates as Jack's close friend that during school Jack was an extracurricular leader in the technology field so that automatically people must know Jack as well as Robin in minutes 27:43 - 28:07 indirectly reveals his discomfort being a popular figure on his campus.

From the interaction between the two, there is no term of social gap that influences them to say something related to politeness, in the second podcast which was directly narrated by the president, Zelky Yusuf, and regular members entitled 'Our Experiences in Learning English' did not show a significant gap between regular members and the president himself through the use of utterances spoken related to politeness. The phenomenon occurs due to several factors including closeness between individuals or the purpose of the podcast which is considered relaxed.

The researcher managed to find an interesting phenomenon that social status does not always affect a person's politeness in choosing certain speech in interacting, especially those who have social gaps. All can be influenced by both psychological and social factors such as comfort, closeness between individuals,

and the influence of the times. These results back up the main ideas of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. These results affirm the fundamental principles outlined in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which suggests that the selection of politeness strategies is shaped by contextual factors such as power relations, social distance, and the level of imposition involved. Nevertheless, the present study offers a more nuanced perspective by demonstrating that perceived interpersonal closeness and shared communicative practices can diminish or even override formal status differences.

As a result, speakers may employ bald-on-record or positive politeness strategies despite existing hierarchical roles. This supports the adaptability of Brown and Levinson's framework and underscores its continued applicability in examining authentic interactions within digital, community-based environments. Nevertheless, the researcher recognizes several limitations within the study, such as the limited number of podcast episodes examined and the inherently interpretative nature of analyzing politeness in spontaneous spoken discourse.

To improve the validity and depth of future investigations, subsequent studies are encouraged to analyze a broader range of data and include more varied community interactions for greater generalizability and analytical precision. The results of this study provide valuable insights into politeness in online communities, indicating that politeness behavior is not solely determined by social status, but is more significantly influenced by the degree of interpersonal familiarity and the informal nature of the communication context.

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