



AN ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE MOVIE: DIALOGUES BETWEEN HARRY POTTER, ALBUS DUMBLEDORE, AND HERMIONE GRANGER

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Abstract

This study analyzes the use of politeness strategies in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, focusing on dialogues between Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, and Hermione Granger. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework—bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. The research identifies 156 politeness strategies across two relational contexts: mentor–student (Harry and Dumbledore) and peer–peer (Harry and Hermione). In Harry and Dumbledore's exchanges, positive politeness dominates (49.45%), reflecting respect and emotional restraint. In contrast, Harry and Hermione's dialogue features more bald on record (32.31%) and off record (30.77%) strategies, indicating emotional openness and directness. Notably, Hermione frequently uses off record strategies (39.47%), such as rhetorical questions and indirect commentary, aligning with her pragmatic and intelligent persona. These findings demonstrate how power, intimacy, and emotional tone shape pragmatic choices in cinematic dialogue, affirming the relevance of politeness theory in media discourse analysis.

Key words: Politeness strategies, Pragmatics, Dialogue

A. INTRODUCTION

Politeness is a crucial aspect of human communication, especially in contexts shaped by power, intimacy, and emotional tone. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness offers a pragmatic framework for understanding how speakers manage face concerns through strategic language choices. In cinematic dialogue, these strategies not only reflect character relationships but also serve as narrative tools that shape audience perception.

This study explores the use of politeness strategies in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, focusing on Harry Potter's interactions with Albus Dumbledore and Hermione Granger. These relationships represent contrasting social dynamics: Harry and Dumbledore engage in mentor–student exchanges

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marked by hierarchy and authority, while Harry and Hermione share peer-level intimacy and emotional openness. By comparing these two relational contexts, the study aims to reveal how politeness strategies shift according to power, social distance, and emotional stakes.

Previous research has examined politeness in various film genres, but few have focused on comparative relational analysis within a single narrative. This study contributes to that gap by analyzing how Harry adapts his pragmatic choices depending on whether he is addressing a figure of authority or a close friend.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with quantitative support. The data were collected from selected scenes in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* featuring significant dialogue between Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, and Hermione Granger. Each utterance was transcribed and categorized using Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Total of 156 politeness strategies were identified consisted of 91 strategies from Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore and 65 strategies from Harry Potter and Hermione Granger.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

This study examined 156 politeness strategies found in the dialogues between Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, and Hermione Granger in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. The analysis revealed distinct patterns in how each character employed Brown and Levinson's four types of politeness strategies—bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record—based on their relational dynamics and communicative goals. In the mentor–student interactions between Harry and Dumbledore, positive politeness emerged as the most dominant strategy, accounting for 49.45% of the total strategies used in their exchanges. This prevalence reflects Harry's respect for Dumbledore's authority and emotional restraint, as well as Dumbledore's efforts to maintain solidarity and reassurance while guiding Harry through complex and often emotionally charged situations. Dumbledore's speech frequently combined directness with subtle implication, balancing his authoritative role with a reflective mentoring style. Harry, on the other hand, used a mix of hedging, deferential expressions, and inclusive language to navigate the power imbalance while still asserting his emotional concerns and moral convictions.

In contrast, the peer-level interactions between Harry and Hermione displayed a different distribution of politeness strategies. Bald on record and off record strategies were more frequent in their exchanges, appearing at 32.31% and 30.77% respectively. These strategies reflect a greater degree of emotional openness, directness, and mutual trust between the two characters. Hermione's use of off record strategies was particularly notable, comprising 39.47% of her contributions. Her frequent reliance on rhetorical questions, indirect commentary, and presuppositions aligns with her pragmatic and intellectually nuanced character,

allowing her to express concern, critique, or guidance without overt confrontation. Harry's responses to Hermione also showed a blend of directness and emotional immediacy, suggesting a comfort level that permits more candid and less mitigated speech.

The contrast between these two relational contexts—mentor–student and peer–peer—highlights how power, intimacy, and emotional tone shape pragmatic choices in cinematic dialogue. Harry's interactions with Dumbledore are marked by caution, respect, and strategic politeness, while his exchanges with Hermione reveal a more spontaneous and emotionally transparent communicative style. These findings affirm that politeness strategies are not merely linguistic tools but are deeply embedded in character relationships and narrative function. The layered use of politeness in the film underscores the complexity of spoken interaction, where characters must balance social roles, emotional stakes, and communicative intent in ways that resonate with real-life discourse.

2. Discussion

Harry's use of politeness strategies in the film *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* reflects a nuanced sensitivity to relational dynamics, particularly when navigating conversations with figures of authority and close peers. In his interactions with Albus Dumbledore, Harry predominantly employs positive politeness strategies, which account for nearly half of the total strategies used in their exchanges. These strategies, including expressions of solidarity, reassurance, and inclusive language, demonstrate Harry's effort to maintain emotional closeness while respecting the hierarchical nature of their relationship. His use of negative politeness strategies, though less frequent, further reveals his awareness of Dumbledore's elevated status and his desire to minimize imposition. These strategies often appear in moments of emotional restraint or when Harry seeks guidance without appearing confrontational, underscoring his cautious yet sincere approach to mentorship.

In contrast, Harry's dialogue with Hermione Granger shows a shift toward more emotionally open and direct communication. Bald on record strategies appear in a significant portion of their exchanges, followed closely by off record strategies. This distribution reflects the peer-level intimacy and mutual trust between the two characters. Harry's use of bald on record strategies often emerges in moments of urgency, frustration, or moral conviction, where he chooses to speak plainly without mitigating the potential impact on Hermione's feelings. His off record strategies, though less frequent than Hermione's, suggest a willingness to engage in indirectness when the emotional stakes are high or when subtlety is required. Overall, Harry's pragmatic choices reveal a flexible communicative style that adapts to the relational context. He is respectful and restrained with Dumbledore, and candid and emotionally transparent with Hermione.

Hermione's politeness strategies are particularly revealing of her character. She uses off record strategies most frequently, including rhetorical questions, indirect commentary, and presuppositions. These allow her to express concern, critique, or strategic insight without overt confrontation. Her reliance on indirectness aligns with her pragmatic intelligence and her role as a voice of reason within the trio. Positive politeness and bald on record strategies also appear in her speech, reflecting her emotional investment and her comfort in expressing direct opinions when necessary. Her use of negative politeness, though less dominant, indicates moments of sensitivity and respect for Harry's emotional state, especially during tense or vulnerable exchanges.

The contrast in strategy use across these two relational contexts, mentor to student and peer to peer, illustrates how power, emotional tone, and intimacy shape pragmatic behavior. Dumbledore's speech combines authority with subtle guidance, using bald on record strategies to assert leadership and off record strategies to encourage reflection. Hermione's dialogue blends emotional openness with strategic indirectness, revealing her intellectual depth and relational closeness with Harry. Harry's own strategies shift depending on the interlocutor, balancing deference with immediacy and adapting his tone to suit the social and emotional demands of each interaction. These layered uses of politeness strategies affirm the complexity of cinematic dialogue and highlight the relevance of Brown and Levinson's theory in analyzing how characters navigate both narrative progression and interpersonal relationships.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The analysis of politeness strategies in the dialogue between Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, and Hermione Granger in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* shows that the way characters speak is shaped by their relationships, emotional tone, and communicative intentions. All three characters use the full range of politeness strategies described by Brown and Levinson, including bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. However, the frequency and function of these strategies vary depending on who is speaking and to whom. In Harry's conversations with Dumbledore, positive politeness is the most dominant. This reflects Harry's respect for Dumbledore's authority and his effort to maintain emotional restraint. Dumbledore, in turn, uses a mix of directness and subtle implication, often relying on bald on record strategies to assert leadership and off record strategies to encourage reflection. Their exchanges show a balance between clarity and emotional depth, with Harry navigating his role as a student and Dumbledore guiding him with a mix of firmness and empathy.

When Harry speaks with Hermione, the tone shifts. Their relationship is built on friendship and emotional closeness, and this is reflected in the types of politeness strategies they use. Bald on record and off record strategies are more frequent in their dialogue, suggesting a comfort with directness and a willingness to be emotionally open. Hermione stands out for her frequent use of off record strategies, especially rhetorical questions and indirect commentary. These choices

align with her intelligent and pragmatic nature, allowing her to express concern or critique without being confrontational. Harry's responses to Hermione are often straightforward, showing his trust and emotional honesty. His use of bald on record strategies in these moments reflects urgency or frustration, especially when the stakes are high.

Overall, the contrast between Harry's interactions with Dumbledore and Hermione highlights how power and intimacy influence the way people speak. With Dumbledore, Harry is cautious and respectful. With Hermione, he is more direct and emotionally expressive. Dumbledore's speech reflects his role as a mentor, combining authority with subtle guidance. Hermione's speech reflects her role as a peer and confidant, blending strategic thinking with emotional support. These patterns show that politeness strategies in film dialogue are not just linguistic choices but also tools for character development and storytelling. The study supports the continued use of Brown and Levinson's theory in analyzing media texts and encourages further exploration of how language reflects relationships and emotional complexity in cinematic narratives.

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