

A Politeness Strategy Analysis of the Main Character on the Television Series “Wednesday”

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Abstract. The question of whether linguistic variables and personality traits are related is controversial. According to some, one of the linguistic factors required for communication with meaning and purpose to be correctly conveyed and interpreted is politeness strategy. This study aims to identify the politeness strategy types and functions used in the *Wednesday* TV series and to investigate the personality of the main character according to the Big 5 personality traits [9]. The *Wednesday* series serves as the main source of data for the study, which employs a descriptive qualitative methodology. The data is analyzed using the politeness theory by [3]. The findings reveal that the main character predominantly uses bald on record strategies, indicating conscientiousness by avoiding negations, negative emotional expressions, and words that reflect discrepancies (Pennebaker & King, 1999). The implications of this study are discussed, highlighting the connection between politeness strategies used by the main character and the Big 5 personality traits, and shedding light on how linguistic choices reflect the character's personality.

Keywords: *Politeness Strategies, Big 5 Personality Traits, Pragmatic, Movie*

1 Introduction

Language is not only a tool to communicate between individuals, but also to express the personality of speaker. agree that human beings use language as a tool of communication or social interaction [11]. In communicating with each other, language users need the ability to comprehend utterances in communication and determine the subsequent actions [20]. The effective communication relies on successfully conveying messages and fostering comfort [13]. People should adopt an appropriate strategy to build their relationships.

In conversation, people often use polite language to avoid hurting the other person's feeling and to ensure that the conversation remains cordial and peaceful. Politeness involves making an effort in some certain circumstances to protect the dignity or reputation of another person. Politeness involves demonstrating respect and consideration for [18].

Being polite is not just for members of a certain social group; it applies to everyone who uses language in daily communication [1]. According to Brown, being courteous is a characteristic of language use that communicates the essence of human sociality through speech [3]. This

strategy can be referred to as the politeness strategy.

In addition to being crucial to communication, politeness plays a significant role in human life. Four strategies can be used to categorize politeness in communication, according to [3]: the *Bald on-record strategy*, the *Negative politeness strategy*, the *Positive politeness strategy*, and the *Off Record indirect strategy*. According to [21] being polite is defined as making an effort to look as though you are aware of the expression on the other person's face. The phenomenon of politeness occurs in society and in actual conversations. As [14] stated, the phenomenon of politeness can be elicited either from real observation of society or from various media such as films, dramas, literature work, and so on.

A popular form of media that can be used to do research in politeness is film. A number of studies in this area can be seen from [5], [20], [16], and [13] where the latest study was based on 3 research on films exploring the use of politeness strategies by [3]. Most of the above studies used descriptive qualitative methods intended to describe, explore, and clarify the data. However, the previous articles only investigated the types and the function of the politeness strategies used, without linking them to other aspects of the film. Only the previous study by [5] that does collaborate the investigation of the type and function of politeness strategies with the other aspect, that is character cultural background.

Although limited in scope, research into relationship between language and personality has been conducted in the past. Chen and Bond investigate the pattern that bilinguals display various personality patterns [4]. The Linguistic Cues for the Automatic Recognition of Personality in Conversation and Text, on the other hand, are examined by [12]. As stated by Holtgraves, language not only used as an action, but it is simultaneously an interpersonal action, the action we perform with language has implications for thought and feeling [22].

In terms of communication, expressing attitude or stance towards entities and concepts is an integral part of human behaviour and personality. Using some of the language aspects such as accent, speech rate, politeness level, and so forth provides pieces of information that can be used to form a person's impression. One benefit of politeness theory, according [12] in his book, is that it suggests connections between interpersonal factors and a variety of language use aspects. Some research examines the relationship between personality using language, as [12] notes that in public communication, among other situations, people use linguistic resources known as the evaluative language to express their attitudes. In this context, a little is known about the politeness strategies and their relationship to individual personality. However, in this study the researcher tries to elaborate the types and function of politeness used in movies with the personality of main character. The object of this study is the first episode of a "Wednesday" series. It aims to know the politeness strategies used and the character's personality based on the politeness used.

This study aims to identify the politeness used by the main character in the "Wednesday" series and figure out the character's personality based on the politeness used. In order to discover the problem of the study, the researcher tried to formulate the issues into two questions. 1) What types and functions of politeness are used by Wednesday Addams as the main characters in the "Wednesday" series? & 2) What type of personality according to Big 5 Personality found in Wednesday Addams' character based on the politeness used?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Politeness Strategy

Politeness is an area of interactional pragmatism which has had an explosion of interest and a proliferation of empirical studies in the last quarter century. In daily communication, politeness can be demonstrated by being courteous to other, respecting each other's way of communicating and saving each other's face. In the field of linguistics, politeness theory was widely introduced by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, or better known to [3] theory of politeness. Brown stated that politeness is the feature of language use that reveals the nature of human sociality as expressed in speech [3]. We can refer to this tactic as the politeness strategy. In addition to being crucial to communication, politeness plays a significant role in human life. Using politeness techniques is crucial because it reduces conflict, promotes harmonious relationships amongst people, and sustains positive social interactions. Being courteous, according to [3], entails giving consideration to the speaker's and listener's faces—faces here denoting public perception. According to [3], there are four politeness strategies—Bald on record, Positive politeness, Negative politeness, and Off record—that can be used to reduce the risk of face damage.

Bald on Record

The "bald-on record" politeness strategy, according to [3], is typified by a general refusal to minimize the listener's FTAs. It is usually recognized by a command line and is sent to those with lesser levels of power by those with higher levels of power. Additionally, they broke down Bald's recorded sub-strategies into eight categories: extreme urgency or desperation; speaking as though attention-getters require a high degree of efficiency; task-oriented or paradigmatic form instruction; empathetic advice or warning; granting permission for something; invitations; welcoming; greeting; and sending off.

Positive Politeness

According to [3], Positive politeness is a strategy in manners that aims to satisfy the interests that are held and displayed by the listener. It refers to conveying a message or an image that encourages the audience to engage in the mode of communication and to engage in actions and modes of expression that they find enjoyable. In dealing with positive politeness according to [3], there are three identification of positive politeness sub-strategies which are claiming common ground, expressing cooperation, and attending to address desire.

Negative Politeness

According to [3], negative politeness is a tactic that causes the listener to have a negative face. This tactic is typically proposed in more formal settings by speakers who are not particularly close to and familiar with each other, making the conversation uncomfortable.

Off Record

Off record is generally used in an oblique way to convey a meaning that the listener wants to hear from the speaker, according to [3]. Because the delivery did not accurately convey the intended meaning, in certain situations the listener may not even comprehend

the meaning or purpose. There are two primary categories of off-record substrategies: being vague or ambiguous and inviting conversational implicature. This study makes the case that people's personalities have an impact on their politeness strategies. See the following for more specific details on personality and language.

2.2 Language and Personality

Humans use language as a tool to convey thoughts, messages, intentions, emotions, and viewpoints to other people. According to Brown, the characteristic that most drastically set *Homo sapiens* apart from other species was language [3]. Since every person's brain functions differently, no two people can make the same speech. Individuals that are distinct from one another are called humans. Their personality, background, opinions, and emotions set them apart from others. Nonetheless, humans and other species are inseparable. Language used reveals distinct patterns influenced by the backgrounds of different personalities.

Language is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors, including social factors, and individual differences. While certain patterns of language use may be associated with specific personality traits, it is crucial to consider other aspects of a person's behavior, cognition, and emotional expression to form a more accurate understanding of a person's personality. Personality has long been conceptualized as stable over time and consistent across situations [4]. Even though language is not a contextual factor that could indicate personality, language may provide certain clues or insights into a person's personality, it is essential to consider it as a part of a broader assessment that includes psychological measures and contextual information. The correlation between language and personality refers to the relationship between an individual's use of language and their personal characteristics. [4] suggest, even if it is difficult to establish a direct causal relationship, a certain pattern of language can be indicative of personality.

2.3 The Big 5 Personality

The theory of personality psychology has evolved over time with regard to the variety of personality traits that exist. Previous theories, such as Cattell's "16 Personality Factors" and Eysenck's "Three-factor theory", have offered their perspectives on the potential number of traits. More recently, The MBTI theory has grown in acceptance among the general public. Researchers believed that Cattell's theory was overly complex, and Eysenck's theory had a narrow scope of discussion despite the advancements made by Cattell and Eysenck. As a result, the five-factor theory was created to describe the crucial characteristics that help shape the various facets of personality.

According to many researchers, five core personality traits are thought to exist in the modern era [21]. These personality traits are categorized as being frequently seen by the "Big Five" theory or model. Those big 5 personalities are *Openness*, *Conscientiousness*, *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness*, and *Neuroticism*. According to Pennebaker and many linguistic characteristics are connected to each of the Big Five personality traits.

The authors discover small but significant correlations between personality characteristics and their linguistic dimensions. Neurotics use more words with negative emotions and fewer words with positive emotions, as well as more first-person singular pronouns. On the other hand, agreeable people express more good feelings and fewer bad feelings. They employ fewer articles as well. Conscientious people avoid negations, words that evoke negative emotions and words that reflect contradictions (such as *should* and *would*). Last but not least, the preference for

longer words and words that express tentativeness (such as perhaps and maybe) as well as the avoidance of first person singular pronouns and present tense forms are signs of openness to experience.

3 Method

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive qualitative research methodology is being used. According to Benson referenced in [17], resources primarily pertaining to the reduction of information in words or to interpretation arguments are considered qualitative research in linguistics. This method used in purpose to describe and explore the use of politeness strategies in Wednesday Series.

3.2 Data and Data Source

The data needed for this research are utterances containing politeness strategies produced by Wednesday Adams as the main character in the first episode of Wednesday series. The data collected was a form of utterance that consisted of politeness strategies produced by the main character in Wednesday series, obtained through the following steps: (1) watching Wednesday series on Netflix and taking attention to the dialogue produced by Wednesday Addams as the main character, (2) identifying the dialog that contains politeness strategies, (3) taking notes to the utterance contains and the time produced by politeness strategies, (4) categorizing the utterance and put them in a kind of column in the table based on the four politeness strategies in [3] theory.

3.3 Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the researchers analyzed the data through the following steps: (1) classifying the politeness produced by the main character in series. The researcher seeks relevant data, which was taken from the main character's utterances that contained politeness strategies, then categorized them based on the four politeness strategies by [3], (2) interpreting the data transcribed from the dialogue in which the researcher analyzed the data and interpreted the function use of the politeness strategies, (3) reporting the data gathered in table form, the researcher presents the data in the discussion and finds out the most politeness strategies used by the main character.

Thus, in the analysis of the main character's personality, the researcher used the politeness strategy applied by the main character and focused on the Big Five model of personality [9]. The second research question is answered by analyzing the most politeness strategy used by each character and matching the characteristics of the Big Five personalities to draw the conclusion.

3 Finding and Discussion

4.1 Types of Politeness Strategies

The researcher provided and wrapped the information gathered from the source in this session. All varieties of politeness strategies are employed in this series, as can be seen from the use of these strategies in Wednesday's series. In table 1, the types of politeness strategies and sub-strategies employed in Wednesday's series are listed.

Table 1. Politeness Strategies Classification

No	Politeness strategies	Sub strategies	data	%	N	%
1	Bald on Record	Speaking as if great efficiency is necessary in attention-getters	2	15	13	39
		Task-oriented/ Paradigmatic Form of Instruction	7	54		
		Sympathetic Advice or Warnings	3	23		
		Greetings and Farewells	1	8		
2	Positive Politeness	Seeking agreement	3	25	12	36
		Avoiding disagreement	2	17		
		Promise	3	25		
		Being optimistic	3	25		
		Giving and asking for a reason	1	8		
3	Off Record	Giving hints	1	14	7	21
		Presupposing prior event	1	14		
		Overstating	2	28		
		Being ironic	1	14		
		Use metaphors	2	28		
4	Negative Politeness	Being pessimistic	1	10	1	3
Total			33	100	33	100

Table 1 displayed four politeness strategies used in first episode of Wednesday's series, as well as 13 "bald onrecord," 12 "positive politeness," and 7 "off-record", 1 "negative politeness," data points. Based on the data collected, the frequency used of politeness strategies used was *Bald on record strategy* 39%, followed by positive politeness 36, *Off Record strategy* 21%, and *negative politeness strategy* 3%. The following data was one example of each politeness strategy produced by the main character in Wednesday's series.

Bald on Record Strategy

The data showed there were 13 utterances produced that contain *bald on record strategies* with four sub-strategies which is *speaking as if great efficiency is necessary in attention-getters, task-oriented/paradigmatic form of instruction, sympathetic advice or warnings, greetings and farewells*. The following show an example taken from the use of *bald on record strategy*.

Extract 1

Rowan : Running to the forest

Wednesday: Rowan, **come back!**

(Wednesday series, First Episode, 50.34-50.36)

In this situation, Wednesday attempted to prevent Rowan from entering the forest, believing that Rowan would be in danger there. She intended to give him direct instruction in the form of *bald on record strategy* with task-oriented sub-strategies so that listener could carry out the directives given. Task oriented used to give tasks to listener in order to achieve the desired result.

Positive Politeness Strategy

The data showed there were 12 utterances produced that show positive politeness with five sub-strategies which is *seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, promise, being optimistic, giving and asking for a reason*. The following data give an example of data that indicated positive politeness.

Extract 2

Wednesday: **Would you mind if I use the powder room first**

Therapist:(Pinching the restroom with her hand)

(Wednesday series, First Episode, 32.37)

In the previous example, Wednesday used a sub-strategy of seeking agreement along with a positive politeness strategy. Wednesday needed to use the restroom, so she politely requested permission before leaving. She chose her words carefully, hoping to give the listener a sense of inclusiveness and consideration. This particular positive politeness strategy was used to make the listener feel respected and to increase the likelihood agreement.

Off Record Strategy

The data showed there were 7 utterances produced that show Off record with five sub-strategies which is *giving hints, presupposing prior events, overstating, being ironic, and using metaphor*. The following data explained one example of data that indicated Off record strategy.

Extract 3

Wednesday: You know the old saying, **never bring a knife to a sword fight**

(Wednesday series, First Episode, 30.52)

During her conversation with the therapist, Wednesday cleverly used metaphors to convey her true answer, rather than stating it directly. By using expressions and figurative language, she skillfully prompted the listener to interpret the message in their own way. Ultimately, her main point was to emphasise the importance of carrying a balanced weapon in warfare.

Negative Politeness Strategy

The data showed an utterance produced containing *negative politeness strategies* with the sub-strategies *being pessimistic*, as in the following example.

Extract 4

Addam: Did you hear that, my little storm cloud? You are in excellent hands

Wednesday: **We will see if she survives the first session.**

(Wednesday series, First Episode, 09.39-09.44)

In the present context, Wednesday's father attempted to persuade her that she would be treated by her new psychiatrist. But instead of confirming her father's claim, she expressed doubt and pessimism about her psychiatrist's ability to handle her. The sub-strategy of the politeness strategy used included negative politeness and pessimism. This further demonstrates that she did not intend for her psychiatrist to exert too much effort.

4.2 Main Character Personality

The main character Wednesday, frequently uses *bald on record* techniques, accounting for 39% of all politeness techniques in the series. The results show that the main character primarily employs bald on record strategies that demonstrate conscientiousness. People who are extremely conscientious are usually well-organized and meticulous. By avoiding negations, negative emotional expressions, and words that reflect discrepancies, they respect others' feelings and are deadline-conscious and well-organized (Pennebaker & King, 1999). Language characteristics can be used to gather information that can be used to shape someone's impression. The politeness theory has the advantage of creating connections between interpersonal factors and many facets of language use, as Holtgraves pointed out in his book [22]. According to [22] there is a small dimension between linguistic dimension and personality. First-person singular pronouns are used more frequently by neurotics, along with words that convey negative emotions more often and positive emotions less frequently. Conversely, agreeable people express more good feelings and fewer bad feelings. They employ fewer articles as well. Negations, terms that arouse unpleasant feelings, and terms that express contradictions (like should and would) are avoided by conscientious people. Finally, but just as importantly, being open to new experiences is demonstrated by the preference for longer words and words that convey hesitancy, like perhaps and maybe, as well as by avoiding first-person singular pronouns and present tense forms.

Based on the previous research by [12] There are a few ways in which personality can influence the use politeness strategies. For example, agreeableness people who score highly in this trait value cooperation, empathy, and social harmony. They are more likely use considerate and polite behaviors such as using polite speech, actively listening, and avoiding conflict. While Extroverted people are more expressive and outgoing and enjoy social interactions. They employ politeness techniques consistent with their gregarious nature, such as small talk, humor, and communicating with enthusiasm. People with high conscientiousness value structure, rules, and social norms. They are more likely to follow accepted politeness conventions and may demonstrate traits like punctuality, adhering to etiquette, and respecting other people's boundaries.

In the first episode of the television series "Wednesday", the main character, Wednesday Addams, frequently employs *bald on record* strategy to communicate with others. For example, when her friend, Rowan, is about to enter the dangerous forest, she called out urgently, "Rowan, come back!" (50.34-50.36). She is giving direct warning and concern for Rowan's safety. This direct command, devoid of negations or hesitation, indicates her conscientiousness.

Positive politeness strategies are the second common strategy used by Wednesday, as in some scenes she politely seeks agreement and conveys consideration for the listener's feelings, reflecting an agreeable and cooperative disposition. For example, when she meets her therapist, she politely asked for permission before she went to the restroom, "Would you mind if I use the powder room first?" (32.37). Wednesday also used off record strategies, using metaphors in her sentence to convey indirect messages. In one of the scenes she says, "You know the old saying, never bring a knife to a sword fight" (30.52). By using a metaphor, she indirectly communicates the importance of being well-prepared, showcasing her openness to creative expressions and abstract thinking. While the negative politeness strategies were the less common in Wednesday's speech, there is an instance where she expresses doubt and pessimism. In one of her scenes, she indirectly questions the therapist's ability, reflecting cautions and pessimistic attitude.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the politeness strategies used by the main character, Wednesday Addams, in the television series "Wednesday". Through a detailed analysis said the study mainly reveals that politeness with *bald on record* is most frequently which the percentage reaches 39%. Other politeness strategies were also discovered, including 3% negative politeness, 36% positive politeness, and 21% off record, were also discovered. She consciously avoids negations, negative emotional expression, and word reflecting discrepancies in her interactions. In this series, 13 utterances were identified as having *bald on record strategies* with four sub-strategies, including *speaking as if great efficiency is necessary for attention-getters, task-oriented/paradigmatic form of instruction, sympathetic advice or warnings, greetings, and farewells*. This linguistic choice provides valuable insights into the character's personality.

As a result of the numerous instances of politeness strategy *bald of record*, it can be concluded that Wednesday has a conscientious personality because she refrains from using negations, derogatory emotional expressions, and words that reflect discrepancies (Pennebaker & King, 1999). While examining politeness strategies was the main aim of this study, it is important to consider the wider implications of these findings, particularly in relation how characters are

portrayed in media. This study highlights how language choice can be used as a tool to delineate and express character traits. Moreover, the study also highlights the fascinating intersection between language and personality, as demonstrated by Wednesday Addams. Individual choice of politeness strategies can provide subtle cues about their personality traits. The use of politeness as one of the linguistic aspects of language can be further explored, including the link between politeness use and personality. This opens up interesting new avenues for linguistic, media studies, and psychology. In light of these findings, the researchers recommend that future research should look more closely at the use of politeness strategies in character portrayal, and extend to a wider range of media, including films, books, and other forms of literature.

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