

## Politeness Strategies in Online Classroom Chats: Its Implication in the Teaching-Learning Process

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### ABSTRACT

*Politeness is part of cultural communication in Filipino classrooms to enhance group discussion. The study analyzed the politeness strategies used by faculty at the University of Northern Philippines that specifically determined the politeness strategies used by the faculty in online classroom chats and their implication in the online teaching-learning process. Transcriptions of classroom interaction in Messenger were data sources which were analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) typology employing conversational analysis and descriptive design. Results revealed that faculty used positive politeness strategies, bald on-record politeness strategies, and off-record politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies and bald on record strategies are most frequently used. These strategies indicate that the faculty members are friendly, respectful, caring, and accommodating and promote good camaraderie between them and students. Politeness strategies create, maintain, and regulate healthy and productive conversation during class interaction, hence improving teaching-learning. It is recommended that faculty be familiarized with the different politeness strategies and their functions which will shape their interpersonal relationships with the students, thus encouraging healthier and more productive conversation, avoiding unwanted circumstances during their class interaction, and improving the online teaching-learning process.*

**Keywords:** *politeness, politeness strategies, interaction, teaching and learning*

### INTRODUCTION

Politeness is one of the Filipino values taught by our fore-parents which is handed down from one generation to another. Politeness is a generic term that applies linguistic rules in communication. Politeness is a linguistic expression of saving someone's face during communication (Darong et al., 2020). This can be observed during conversations in different situations and occasions.

As a means of saving someone's face, people typically engage in pleasant conversation by employing various politeness methods. Brown and Levinson (1987) discussed a variety of politeness methods that speakers can use to pay attention to another person's face and lessen their threat level. The specific techniques employed depend on the power factors between the speaker and hearer, the social distance between them, and the perceived gravity of the Face Threatening Act (FTA), which is determined by the cultural context in which they are interacting. Speakers choose how to depict face-threatening actions. They could commit the act baldly, without any mitigation or reparation, in the most direct, clear, unequivocal and simple way feasible.

Employing politeness methods is an element of everyone's cultural communication. For instance, welcoming someone is a key aspect of courtesy and friendliness. All societies have some type of greeting. They are basic to civilized interaction (Universal Class, 2022). Despite having basic culture and principles of wanting to save someone's face, people are met with situations when they must deal with FTA. They are successful in sustaining a healthy dialogue or may encounter misinterpretation.

From the commencement of the COVID-19 epidemic, educational institutions like the University of Northern Philippines are mandated to observe different teaching learning modalities such as online class, flexible learning, and distance learning. E-Learning is a new educational paradigm which allows virtual connection amongst teachers and students. The benefit of a flexible setting is that professors may improve their knowledge and skills while students can learn at their own pace (Lamarca, 2019).

Faculty members made use of different online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Edmodo, Messenger Group Chat, and other learning platforms. Messenger group chat is mainly used among the enumerated mode of communication, especially in giving instructions, announcements, and clarifications because of its accessibility. Though there are rules and regulations in the classroom, everyone could easily convey their expressions and emotions in Messenger.

Staff (2022) mentioned that face-to-face and telephone conversations foster higher social awareness, stability, and cooperation than online interactions. Social norms, such as body language, politeness, and physical appearance, regulate people's behavior and facilitate interpersonal communication. A shared atmosphere might also improve comprehension. Over the telephone, the speaker's intensity, pace, and inflection provide useful social information. In other words, it is more difficult to establish rapport during online negotiations due to the impersonal character of the exchanges. Written interactions such as in Messenger are more prone to be misinterpretations than a face-to-face communication since the receiver is not so sure of the tone and the style of delivering the written messages. Leech (1982) emphasized that visual and aural media are available in speech, and quick feedback is offered. As a result, if there is any indication of confusion or misunderstanding, the message can be clarified or reiterated instantly, unlike with written discussion. Staff (2022) says that the speed of electronic communication lends itself to brief, direct messages. This lack of tact may be acceptable for brief, factual interactions, but it becomes a hindrance in collaborative negotiations requiring contemplation and discussion, and it hinders negotiator techniques for overcoming cultural communication hurdles. Hence, instructors are increasingly frequently required to negotiate online with FTA. Then, tactics of politeness are employed to maintain the smoothness of the interaction.

Hence, the researchers needed to conduct a study to analyze a significant linguistic phenomenon that reflects the politeness strategies used by faculty in online classes at this university. The study aims to analyze the politeness strategies used by the faculty in online classes during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Term, AY 2020-2021 at the University of Northern Philippines. The study further discusses the implications of politeness strategies in the online teaching-learning process.

This study is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which defines politeness as efforts to redress insults to a person's self-esteem by asserting positive societal

ideals in social interactions. The sociological idea of face (as in "save face" or "lose face") refers to this self-esteem when discussing civility as a response to reduce or avoid face-threatening activities such as requests or insults. Important components of the framework include positive and negative faces, face-threatening activities, FTA tactics, and factors that influence strategy selection.

Positive and negative faces play a role in the foundation of the philosophy of politeness. A positive face expresses an individual's urge for their wishes and desires to be respected in a social situation. This is the preservation of a positive and stable self-image. A negative face reflects an individual's need for freedom of action, independence from imposition, and the right to make one's own judgments. Collectively, these aspects of face respect, including an individual's face demands for autonomy and competence, must be addressed beforehand. This theory believes that most speaking acts intrinsically threaten either the speaker's or the hearer's face, and that politeness is therefore a required component of non-offensive, that is, non-face threatening communication, and entails the redressing of the positive and negative face threats (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Adel et al. (2016) highlighted Brown and Levinson's politeness model based on the notions of face described by Goffman as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by self-presentation" (1967, p. 5). In addition, Deutsch (1961) described the face as "one of a person's most sacred things" (p. 897) and argued that keeping this item is essential to one's self-esteem. Brown and Levinson (1987) attempted to create an explicit model of politeness based on human nature. They identified four principal sorts of politeness strategies: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-the-record (indirect). The primary objective is to comprehend the diverse interactional tactics employed by distinct individuals to satisfy the specific needs of the face.

First, the objective of bald on-record tactics is not to lessen the threat to the hearer's face, and they are employed to clearly express the speaker's wants to the other party. The phrase "give me the pen" is an example of bald on-record usage of imperative forms. The use of mitigating devices, such as "please" in "please give me the pen," might soften the directive. Also, it should be noted that in an emergency, a directive such as do not touch the bottle serves no courtesy function. Moreover, according to Culpeper (1996), a naked on-record politeness tactic is employed when a threat to the hearer's face is minor (e.g., in phrases such as "come in and sit down") or when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer, such as when a parent tells a youngster to cease complaining.

Second, positive politeness measures are utilized to decrease the threat to the hearer's positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Positive politeness tactics emphasize amicability and camaraderie between the speaker and hearer; the speaker's desires are comparable to those of the hearer. There are numerous strategies to achieve familiarity and establish common ground. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) view, fifteen tactics can demonstrate positive politeness. These strategies include the following ones: (1) observing and attending to the listener, (2) exaggerating by utilizing various intonation, tone, and other prosodic qualities, (3) increasing the listener's interest by adding intensifying modifiers, (4) using in-group identity indicators, (5) seeking agreement by the addressee's comments through using specific statements or repetition, avoiding dispute by employing false agreement, (6) expressing pseudo-agreement, hedging, or telling white lies, (7)

demonstrating common ground, (8) joking, (9) showing regard for the desires of the listener, (10) offering and promising, (11) having a positive outlook, (12) involving both the speaker and the hearer in the action, (13) stating or requesting the reason, (14) assuming reciprocity, and (15) offering the hearer a gift of sympathy, understanding, and collaboration in the dialogue. Positive politeness increases the hearer's good and consistent self-image by understanding the hearer's need for their wishes and desires to be respected socially.

Finally, negative politeness tactics refer to the avoidance of imposition on the hearer and can be considered the desire to remain autonomous employing distancing styles like using modal verbs or hesitation, apologizing for imposition, asking inquiries, or asking for permission to pose a question. Negative politeness is defined by Koike (1992) as "consideration of the listener's desire to act uninhibited and get attention" (p. 21). Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, there are ten ways to demonstrate negative politeness: (1) being indirect, (2) utilizing questions and hedges, (3) being gloomy (i.e., being pessimistic whether the hearer wants to do what we ask or not), (4) reducing the imposition, (5) showing respect and deference to the listener, (6) apologizing, (7) depersonalizing speaker and audience by omitting the addressee, (8) using a general expression rather than identifying the addressee by name, (9) Nominalizing, and (10) going on record as owing or not owing the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) defined off-the-record (indirect) technique as the use of indirect language to remove the speaker's ability to be intimidating. According to their approach, 15 tactics demonstrate off-the-record courtesy. These techniques are as follows: (1) providing tips, (2) providing association hints, (3) assuming, (4) understating or saying less than is required, (5) overstating or providing more information than is necessary, (6) utilizing tautologies (statements of obvious and necessary truth) and contradictions, (8) being ironic, (9) using a metaphor, utilizing rhetorical questions, which do not demand a response, ten. (11.) being vague, (12.) being ambiguous, (13.) overgeneralizing and without mentioning the hearer or addressing him directly, (14.) displacing, and (15.) being incomplete by utilizing ellipsis

Researches on politeness tactics are primarily on spoken language such in classroom settings. Considering the current state of affairs in New Normal Education, courses are conducted online, with the majority of instructions, announcements, and explanations communicated through Messenger group chat. In addition, it is crucial to examine interaction during online classes, especially using Messenger group chat. Similar research by Eshghinejad and Moin (2016) and Mahmud (2020) focused on discovering pragmatic competence-related politeness methods and controlling respect through polite phrases, respectively. This study focuses on identifying classroom conversation etiquette practices and their implications for the teaching-learning process.

Tact and diplomacy, such as courtesy methods, facilitate effective communication, particularly during negotiations and when seeking to be persuasive or aggressive in the classroom. The instructors, students, administrators, and other researchers may profit from this study on their incidence. It heightens instructor and student awareness of courteous behavior. Their grasp of polite practices could lead them in behaving appropriately toward more productive classroom communication. This research could also shed light on their

motivations and perceptions for employing politeness methods, as well as their consequences for teaching and learning.

School administrators may apply the findings of this study to check the amount of using politeness tactics when speaking, especially during lectures. So, they can better comprehend this linguistic trend and spearhead training programs and conferences promoting tact and diplomacy through the use of politeness tactics.

Lastly, academics, who want to investigate similar regions or other unknown areas further, could utilize this as a reference in finding the consequences of utilizing politeness techniques in-class interaction for a better teaching and learning scenario in Filipino colleges and universities.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design.** This research employed conversational analysis, following a descriptive design, to identify the politeness strategies in online classroom chats. An in-depth analysis of faculty and students' conversations during online classes was investigated and explained in detail. Thematic analysis was employed in the interpretation of the data. This method reveals emerging themes in a study which was likewise used by Bersamina et al. (2021) and Ursulom et al. (2021) in their studies.

**Population and Sample.** The subjects of the study are five faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences along with their students. Their immediate supervisor recommended the faculty members, including two males and three females.

Transcriptions extracted from the Messenger group chat of the five faculty members served as the study's data. The transcription includes a conversation between the faculty and students in their FB Messenger during the second semester, Academic Year 2019-2020 online class.

**Data Gathering Tools.** Group chats using FB Messenger served as data gathering tools where faculty and students can interact during their online classes. The FB Messenger group chat was used as a platform for announcements, instructions, clarifications, and students' concerns.

**Data Gathering Procedure.** To attain the study's objectives, the researchers asked permission from the President of the University of Northern Philippines to conduct the study. After permission was granted, the researchers then asked for the assistance of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and of the Heads of the different departments, particularly the Department of Languages and Humanities, Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, and Department of Physical Education for them to recommend a faculty member to represent each department. The researchers then sought informed consent from the five recommended faculty members through FB Messenger. Furthermore, the researchers requested the faculty respondents to add them to the Messenger group chat of their classes. For data analysis, the researchers then extracted transcriptions of faculty and student conversation during online classes from FB Messenger Group Chat.

**Ethical Considerations.** The study underwent review by the Ethics Review Committee in the University with ERC Approval #A-22-099. Informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity were observed in the conduct of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Politeness Strategies Used by the Faculty in Online Classroom Chats

Results revealed that the faculty used the following politeness strategies: positive politeness strategies, bald on-record strategies, and off-record strategies.

#### Positive Politeness Strategies

*Positive Politeness Strategies* were most commonly observed by the faculty. Results show that they use many different forms of positive politeness. The most frequently used positive politeness strategies are *noticing and attending to the hearer (e.g., greetings, giving compliments), using in-group identity markers, showing the speaker's concern for the hearer's wants, and telling or asking the reason*. It could be noticed that the positive politeness identified promotes good camaraderie between faculty and students. Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that these are expressions of solidarity (appreciating the addressee's positive face, sharing the same values) and an act of sympathy towards the addressee. He further discussed that positive politeness reduces the threat to the hearer's positive face.

Actual lines showing some positive politeness strategies are as follows:

*Noticing and attending to the hearer*

*Excerpt 1:*

*T1: "Good afternoon class. Meet at 1:30 pm 😊 See you!"*

*S1: Good afternoon, ma'am!*

*S2: Okay, ma'am.*

*Excerpt 2:*

*T2: "Thank you class for your participation 😊 See you next week 😊"*

*S1: Thanks ma'am*

*S2: Bye, ma'am. See you, mam*

*S3: (heart reacts)*

In this study, *the faculty identified noticing and attending to the hearer (e.g., greeting, giving compliments, using smile emoji)* as the most commonly used politeness strategies. From excerpt 1, it could be shown that the faculty introduced a very warm, friendly, and accommodating persona while they started their classes. The students then are encouraged to return the same persona to the faculty by greeting them back. This also makes them welcome and more comfortable and at ease to respond and participate in class instead of being fearful and not saying anything. This finding confirms the claim of Terada

(2018) that starting class by greeting the students helps set a positive tone for the rest of the class, promoting their sense of belonging, boosting their academic engagement, and reducing disruptive behavior. He further stressed that when students feel welcome in the classroom, they are more willing to put time and effort into learning.

In excerpt 2, the faculty expresses appreciation to the students for their participation in the class by saying thank you. The students then feel acknowledged and validated for their effort, and they are encouraged to appreciate the faculty by giving thanks to them. This exchange of expression promotes belongingness, trust, and improved relationships between the faculty and students. Students also feel inspired if the faculty appreciates their efforts. This supports the claim of a psychologist named Suttie (2019) that expressing gratitude to others feels good as it helps build trust and closer bonds with other people. She also mentioned that a new study suggests that expressing gratitude improves one-on-one relationships and could bring entire groups together—inspiring a desire to help and connect in people who simply witness an act of gratitude.

#### *Using in-group identity markers*

Excerpt 3:

*T3: "The link was sent in your emails **ading**" (T3)*

*S1: Thank you, ma'am*

Excerpt 4:

*"Join the meet **po**" (T1)*

*S1: Okay po ma'am.*

*Using in-group identity markers* is another commonly used positive politeness by the faculty. It is shown that in excerpts 3 and 4, faculty demonstrate the use of in-group identity markers such as *ading* and *po* in Ilocano and Filipino terms, respectively, as their way of respecting their students and toning down their utterances. It could be noticed that as faculty use these expressions, the students are encouraged to do the same or use other positive politeness such as giving compliments. This suggests that the use of in group identity markers makes the exchange of conversation more pleasant which later improves relationships between the faculty and student. Meneses (2018) found out in her study "Code-switching as a Politeness Marker in Sangguniang Panlalawigan Regular Sessions in Albay" that the code-switching, which applies as an in group marker, can soften the tone of the utterances which have potential face threats and can weaken illocutionary force or minimizes the imposition of the FTA.

#### *Showing the speaker's concern for the hearer's wants*

Excerpt 5:

*T4: "We will not meet today in Gmeet class. Kindly continue doing/ practicing your Cha Cha Cha Dance routine and Kindly Submit your outputs in our GC for requirements. Thank you and **have a nice day. Enjoy!**"*

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S1: *Yey! Thank you, ma'am.*

S2: *Thank you so much, ma'am!*

Showing the speaker's concern for the hearer's wants is another positive politeness strategy used by the faculty. It is shown in excerpt 5 that faculty manifest concern for the students to enjoy their day. This gives the students the feeling that the faculty give them emotional support. Thus, it could be seen in their response that they appreciate the faculty so much by verbally saying thank you with a more intense feeling. This develops a sense of belonging, motivating the students to become more participative in class. This corroborates the claim of Kelly (2018) that improving feelings of belonging in school can support student engagement and achievement. Research shows that students who report a high sense of belonging in school generally put in more effort and are more motivated.

*Telling or asking the reason*

Excerpt 6:

**T4: "We are required to attend the flag ceremony at 7:30 and there will be a short program after, I will try to send the link later if not then we will have our online class on Wednesday."**

S1: *Yes maám.*

S2: *Okay maám Thank you.*

Excerpt 7:

**T5: "Good afternoon class. Please continue reading your materials and we will have a synchronous class next meeting because I am attending a zoom meeting now. Thanks ♥"**

S1: *Good afternoon maám*

S2: *Noted maám*

Still, another, telling or asking the reason, is one of the faculty's politeness strategies identified in the study. In excerpts 6 and 7, it could be shown that faculty inform or update students about their reasons for not conducting their online classes. This shows that the faculty respects the students' time by informing them properly whether or not they could meet. This further manifests that the faculty is responsible for checking on the students during class hours and updating them when the need arises. The students then feel that they are being informed; thus, they express gratitude to the faculty. This promotes respect, politeness from the students, and a closer relationship between the faculty and the students.

### **Bald on-record Strategies**

Bald on-record strategies identified in this study include using command when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer, mitigating devices, and imperative forms. The most frequently used is command when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) stressed that bald on-record strategies do not minimize the threat to the hearer's face. This is based on direct speaking and direct behavior. They are



used to address the other person to express their needs directly. The addresser does not use long sentences or phrases, simply requests or commands.

Some forms of these strategies are evident in the following excerpts:

*Using command when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer*

Excerpt 1:

T1: *"Good morning class! Gmeet at 9:45 am. See you! **Be ready!**"*

S1: Okay po maám.

S2: See you maam <3

Excerpt 2:

T4: *"I will give the instruction after our discussion, **don't answer the activity yet.**"*

S1: Noted maám.

S2: Yes po maám.

S3: Alright maám.

Using command when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer is one of the bald on politeness strategies used by the faculty. In excerpts 1 and 2, it could be read that faculty give direct commands to the students. This manifests that the faculty hold more authority over the student that they could give direct commands without being misunderstood as impolite. This is because, in the faculty and student relationship, faculty are expected to be responsible and have the authority to give instructions rather than students instructing the faculty. Culpeper (1996) claims that the bald on-record politeness strategies are used when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer, as in the interaction between a parent and a child when the parent says: stop complaining. In the context of this study, the faculty has the authority over the students to give instruction, clarification, or announcements. Students then submit to the faculty's instructions by signifying their acceptance. In this conversation exchange, it could be understood that faculty and student have established a close relationship with one another since the faculty feels comfortable giving direct commands.

*Using mitigating devices*

Excerpt 3:

T3: *"I will be sending your personal links for the midterm exam via email. **Kindly** wait for it. Good Luck!"*

S1: Okay po maám, Thank you so much po maám.

Excerpt 4:

T5: *"Good morning. Let's meet today via google meet. **Please** wait for the link. Thanks. ♥"*

S1: Good morning maám. Sure po Maám.

Using mitigating devices is another bald on politeness strategy used by the faculty. As shown in excerpts 3 and 4, faculty use mitigating devices such as *kindly* and *please*. This manifests that although faculty are more authoritative than students, they still use mitigating devices to make their students feel more comfortable by toning down the command. Such circumstances become more favorable to the students, as reflected in their agreeable responses. This promotes a healthier exchange of conversation between the teacher and the students.

### *Using short imperative forms*

Excerpt 5:

T3: ***"PM me."***

S1: Okay po maám

S2: Yes po maám. I sent you a message na po maám.

Still, another, using short imperative forms is one of the bald on politeness strategies used by the faculty. As shown in excerpt 5, the faculty made use of short imperative forms. It could be noted that Messenger group chat is generally used to give instructions, provide clarifications on students' queries, and give announcements. Under the said circumstances, faculty and students are given limited interaction time. Thus, the faculty have a sense of urgency in giving instructions and do not use roundabout instructions but rather direct. Students then feel the urgency of the instruction of the faculty and respond immediately to the command. This corroborates Hirschová's (2006) claim that this phenomenon is well known for signals when there is limited time to think about what to say. Short commands (e.g., Lookout! or be careful!) signal a high degree of urgency. This kind of expression encourages students to think fast and respond with urgency.

### **Off-record Strategies**

*Giving hints* and *using contradictions* are identified as off record politeness strategies used by the faculty. Brown and Levinson (1987) explained this type of politeness strategy as an indirect language to remove the speaker from the potential to be imposing.

Off-record strategies:

#### *Giving hints*

Excerpt 1:

T1: ***"Gmeet at 9:30 am"***

S1: Noted po maám.

Excerpt 2:

T4: ***"This is the code of our google classroom."***

S1: Okay po maám.

Excerpt 3:

T4: ***"I have posted materials and assignment in our google classroom."***

S1: Yes po maám.

As shown in excerpts 1, 2, and 3, the faculty does not give a direct command but hints about what the students should do. This manifests that faculty sometimes imply instructions rather than being direct. It could be deduced that the faculty may not want to sound authoritative, or it could also be that the faculty's relationship with the students is still reserved. This agrees with Hirschová's (2006) claim that the use of off-record strategies depends on the relationship between the addresser and addressee; the closer the relationship is, the less confusing the utterance is perceived to be. In other words, faculty and students might still try to establish a closer relationship. That is why faculty use indirect commands.

### *Using contradictions*

Excerpt 4:

T2: *"I don't think so but more or less. Each of us has a unique way of perceiving and understanding the world. Each of us even twins will have difference in how they see the world, coz there will be times that will interact with other human beings that elicit different behaviors and way of thinking."*

S1: But did we .... Is this why it is so hard to gather concise data on the experiment with humans?

In excerpt 4, the faculty made use of contradictions. The faculty may not want to sound conclusive. This usually happens when faculty are not very sure of the exactness of the information. This promotes fact-checking on the part of the student, as implied in the response where the student gathers more information to validate the previous information. In other words, these expressions, such as faculty's contradictions, make students think critically and encourage them to find out what is true. Thus, it makes learning more meaningful.

## **2. The Implications of Politeness Strategies in the online teaching-learning process**

Generally, it can be inferred that the faculty are friendly, respectful, caring, and accommodating, as manifested in their use of different politeness strategies categorized by Brown and Levinson (1987) as positive politeness, bald on record, and off-record strategies. It could be noted that using the different types of politeness strategies promotes good camaraderie between the faculty and students. Politeness strategies create, maintain, and regulate healthy and productive conversation during class interaction, thus improving the teaching-learning process.

### ***Boosts the morale of students***

Positive politeness strategies boost the morale of the students while co-creating new knowledge. It suggests that the faculty create and maintain a friendly and familiar conversation during classroom interaction by setting the tone of the class; appreciating, acknowledging, and recognizing the students; respecting the students with the use of group

identity markers; giving emotional support; and properly updating the students. It could be further interpreted that faculty frequently use positive politeness to ensure that students do not feel bad about themselves, feel embarrassed, or are ignored. Thus, this creates a healthy exchange of information and avoids unwanted circumstances, paving the way for a better teaching-learning process. This implies that while faculty maintain a friendly relationship with the students, the students develop a sense of belonging to the class group, increasing their interest and desire to engage in the teaching-learning process.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) influential work on politeness proceeds from the notion that humans have a sense of social value or self-esteem, known as the face, which they seek to maintain during interactions with others. In addition to maintaining their face, speakers will also seek to maintain the face of their interlocutors. In other words, the faculty maintain their face. However, they also maintain the face of the students in the sense that they ensure that students feel acknowledged, appreciated, cared for, and validated while in a group discussion or class interaction. This finding supports the claim of Adel et al. (2016) that positive politeness plays an important role when forming good interpersonal relationships. However, Hirschová (2006) remarks that there is still a social distance between the participants in using positive politeness strategies.

### ***Suggests authority, familiarity, and urgency***

Bald on record strategies suggests authority, familiarity, and urgency. It could be noted that faculty comfortably takes authority over their students, tone down their commands, and gives short commands, which signals a high degree of urgency. It could be deduced that faculty uses bald on record strategies to set healthy boundaries with the students while being more comfortable with them. They feel that they are more authoritative than the students or are already comfortable with their students that they could give direct commands with the idea that their students would understand since they are already familiar with one another. This confirms the claim of Hirschova (2006) that bald on record strategies which he termed 'direct conduct', is acceptable only in communication in which the participants are familiar with each other.

### ***Evades imposition and encourages critical thinking***

Off-record politeness strategies evade imposition and encourage critical thinking. It could be noted that these strategies, termed indirect conduct (Hirchova, 2006), regulate healthy and productive conversation between the faculty and students by not becoming imposing and giving the students the chance to think critically about interpreting contradictions, hints, and the like. This finding confirms the claim of Brown and Levison (1987) that using indirectness reduces coercion and requires the addressee to infer possible meanings.

Hence, the frequent use of positive politeness and bald-on-record strategies in the online classroom chats could be rooted in the close relationship between the faculty and the students. Park (2008) stressed that the commonality of bald-on-record and positive politeness strategies is that both tactics are grounded in proximity. Accordingly, they bring forth close interpersonal relationships between participants. Employment of such politeness

tactics indicates that effective interpersonal communication plays a vital role in enhancing group discussion.

In other words, direct strategies: positive politeness and bald on record strategies being used by the faculty most frequently suggests familiarity, authority, and close relationship of the faculty and the students, whereas indirect strategies: off the record which were less frequently used only indicates that the faculty doesn't need to be indirect because they have established a close relationship. They are only used if the interactional context requires indirectness, which is a case-to-case basis. Indeed, examining the politeness strategies employed can provide further insight into the relationships portrayed in the context (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The result is in line with the results of the study conducted by Park (2008) on the use of politeness strategies in CMC and with the results of the study of Adel et al. (2016) on the use of politeness strategies in a class blog where positive politeness and bald-on-record strategies are most frequently used.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the faculty used positive politeness and bald-on-record politeness strategies rather than off-the-record. The faculty are friendly, respectful, caring, and accommodating, promoting good camaraderie between the faculty and students. Politeness strategies create, maintain, and regulate healthy and productive conversation during class interaction, improving teaching-learning. The study of the politeness strategies in online classroom chats corroborates Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend that the faculty be familiar with the different politeness strategies and their functions. This will shape their interpersonal relationships with the students, encouraging them to be more participative in the class discussion. It is also recommended that the university conducts a seminar on politeness strategies to inform and encourage the faculty to use different politeness strategies that would create a healthy and more productive conversation and avoid unwanted circumstances during their class interaction, thus improving the online teaching-learning process. Finally, a similar study on politeness strategies used between faculty and supervisor can be conducted to discern whether similar results would be observed. It is encouraged that an in-depth interview will be applied in the said study.

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