

The Use of Politeness Strategies in “Gung Ho” Movie (1986)

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Abstract: This study deals with the politeness strategies used in Gung Ho movie between Hunt and Kazihiro by focusing on the Scollon & Scollon (2001) theory. This research is aimed to find out the types of strategies have been used by Hunt to Kazihiro, Kazihiro to Hunt, and the types politeness strategies mostly used by Hunt and Kazihiro. This research uses descriptive quantitative method. After analyzing the data using Scollon & Scollon theory (2001), there are 34 strategies (25 involvement and 9 independence strategies) have been found in the data analysis. In terms of involvement strategies, both characters made “notice to the hearer’s (interests, wants, needs, and goods)” strategy the most. It is possible because both of them try to build a good relationship by paying attention or notice to each other’s condition since they are from different culture (American and Japanese).

Key words: Politeness strategies, involvement strategy, independence strategy

Introduction

Human being as a social creature needs to relate and socialize with other people. Thus, we need language to make us easier in building a communication with others. As a human, we have our own characteristics in speaking. Therefore, many of us use many different styles and ways when we communicate with others. Actually, nowadays people do not pay attention too much to how they talk. In fact, this shows that people do not realize that the use of language can affect someone’s behavior. There are many kinds of languages, English, Japanese, Indonesian, etc. In today’s world, English has become a part of every fields; an international language of communication, business, science, technology, etc. In business life, English language is everything and business people have to pay attention to how they deliver the language, whether polite or impolite. If they use it in a wrong way, it will affect the client’s behavior towards them. That is why, English language is very important in business communication and also politeness strategies are needed.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p.91), politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers “face”. Face is deliberated as a public image that is in a part of communication (Scollon&Scollon, 2001). Being polite is very important in building a relationship with other people. In fact, people will respect and appreciate someone who can speak in a polite way. In other words, other people will not build a relationship with a person who talks impolitely to them because it will make them feel uncomfortable. It means to build good relationship people have to pay attention to the politeness strategy.

Politeness strategy may be applied in positive and negative strategies, scollon & scollon (2001, p.46) suggest another two strategies, “Involvement” and “Independence”. Involvement refers to showing a person is very enthusiastic in someone else’s condition and show that a person is attracted in common things. While independence shows that a person has his/her own right that cannot be dominated by other people in the same group (Scollon & Scollon 2001,47). From the explanation above, we can see how important politeness strategies are in conversation; thus, we have to know how to use it in an appropriate way. Considering the importance of politeness strategies in conversation and how to use it appropriately, the writer is interested to conduct a research on politeness strategies by Scollon&Scollon (2001); Involvement and independence.

The writer uses “Gung Ho” as the source to investigate the politeness strategies that are used by two main characters, Hunt and Kazihiro in that movie. The writer is interested in this movie because the

writer wants to find out the numbers of politeness strategies that each character used, especially between sub-ordinates and super-ordinates status since the movie provided these two differential statuses the most between two characters in the movie and those are related to the writer's major, English for business communication. Moreover, the writer also wants to find out politeness strategies that are used and mostly used by two different cultures (Japanese and American) which are reflected clearly in the movie. This movie provides examples of politeness strategies used by American's representative 'Hunt' and Japanese's representative 'Kazihiro'. In this movie, Kazihiro has a higher position than Hunt in Assan Motors company. Assan Motors is Japan's company that reopen an American plant in a small Pennsylvania town which several plants there were bankrupted and many employees were fired so that Americans sent a representative (Hunt) to hold a cooperation with Japanese people to save Americans from the crisis. This movie was released on March 14, 1986 by Ron Howard and it is considered as comedy film. The story began by the main character of America who is Hunt, represented America by going to Tokyo to persuade Assan Motors Company to take over an auto assembly plant that was abandoned by an American Company. His effort succeeded because the CEO of Assan Motors agreed with the deal and asked his representative to come directly to Pennsylvania town (a little town in America) to give this good news. Japanese's decision makes American workers get their job again. This movie showed two main characters from America and Japan who are struggled to understand each cultures (Humphreys, 2010).

In this research, the writer wants to investigate kind of politeness strategies are used in *Gung Ho movie* by Hunt when he is conversing to his Super-ordinate (Kazihiro) and Kazihiro when he is speaking to his sub-ordinate (Hunt). The writer has three problems that have to be solved in politeness expression, politeness strategies produced by Hunt when speaking to his Super-ordinates 'Kazihiro', by Kazihiro when speaking to his Sub-ordinates 'Hunt', and politeness strategies are mostly used by Hunt and Kazihiro when they speak to each other in *Gung Ho movie*.

The writer uses the main theory of politeness strategies (Involvement and Independence strategy) by Scollon and Scollon (2001) in order to help her figure out the type of politeness strategies that are used by Hunt and Kazihiro in this movie.

a. Politeness Strategies of Involvement

Involvement strategy happens when a person needs to maintain closeness with other people whom he/she is interacting, to show that he/she considers them as the closest person, even shows he/she is attracted into some cases and also pays attention to someone else's condition. Below are the strategies of Involvement:

1. *Notice or attend to H (interests, wants, needs, and goods).*
2. *Exaggerate (interest, approve, sympathy with H)*
3. *Claim in-group membership with H.*
4. *Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and empathy.*
5. *Be optimistic.*
6. *Indicate S knows H's wants and is taking them into account.*
7. *Assume or assert reciprocity*
8. *Use given names and nicknames.*
9. *Be voluble (fluent).*
10. *Use H's language or dialect.*

b. Politeness Strategies of Independence

Independence strategy happens when a person needs to maintain distance with other people whom he/she is interacting to, either friends or strangers, because he/she wants to show that he/she has a right that cannot be dominated by others. Below are the strategies of Independence:

1. *Make minimal assumptions about H's wants.*

2. Give H the opinion not to do the act.
3. Minimize threat.
4. Apologize.
5. Be pessimistic
6. Dissociate S, H from the discourse.
7. State a general rule.
8. Use family names and titles.
9. Be taciturn (silent).
10. Use own language or dialect.

Methods

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach. The writer used this approach because she analyzed the utterances that were found in the dialogue and counted the total of politeness strategies used by Hunt and Kazihiro in *Gung Ho* movie. In doing this research, the primary instrument of the study is the writer herself. It is because the writer did not need any tools even any questionnaires to complete this research. All of the data collection and the analysis are done by the writer herself that is supported by a laptop containing the transcript and the movie itself. The data were 194 utterances between Hunt and Kazihiro. The transcript that has been downloaded from *Script-o-rama* website and the movie has been downloaded also from *IndoXXI* website. The speaker is needed to help the writer checked the transcription is the same with the movie. In order to analyze the source, the writer has done several procedures. First, the writer searched for the movie and downloaded it to play for several times. Second, the writers try to watch the movie several times to understand the meaning of the entire story of the movie and make her draft of the transcription. Third, the writer searched for the transcription from the internet to make sure that her draft is in the right position. Next, she collected the data from the conversation between two main characters Hunt when conversing to his Super-ordinates ‘Kazihiro’ and Kazihiro when conversing to his Sub-ordinates ‘Hunt’ and those conducting politeness strategies. Lastly, the writer put the data in the table to get a better understanding. Meanwhile, the source of the data is based on the transcript of the movie *Gung Ho* (1986) which was retrieved from *Script-o-rama* website. The topic of this movie is about how politeness strategies used by two different countries (Japan and America). The movie was 1 hour 53 minutes long. The data of this study is the utterances that contained politeness strategies that have been used by two main characters Hunt and Kazihiro.

Findings and Discussion

The writer found that certain strategies did not find throughout the dialogue. From 194 utterances of Hunt and Kazihiro, the writer found a total of 33 utterances which used politeness strategy. The following is the finding of each independence and involvement strategies based on the character that used it:

a. Politeness Strategies used by Hunt to Kazihiro

The total of Hunt in using politeness strategies in the movie is 13 strategies of both involvement and independence when he speaks to Kazihiro, 9 strategies of involvement and 4 strategies of independence once. Moreover, Hunt used 16 times of involvement strategy and 6 times of independence.

Table 4.1 Total Strategies Used by Hunt to Kazihiro

Involvement	Total	Independence	Total
notice or attend to H interests, wants, needs, and goods	5	Minimize threat	2

Exaggerate in interest, approve, sympathy with H	2	Apologize	2
Claim in-group membership with the hearer	1	State a general rule	1
Claim common point of views, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and empathy	2	Be pessimistic	1
Be optimistic	1		
Indicate S knows H's wants and taking them into account	1		
Assume or assert reciprocity	1		
Use given names and nicknames	2		
be voluble or fluent	1		
	16		6

- Involvement Strategy

Strategy 1: Notice to the hearer's interests, wants, needs, and goods

In this part, the speaker has to pay attention to the hearer's condition or anything which looks that the hearer wants the speaker to notice to it. Below is the example that Hunt used in conversing to Kazihiro:

Hunt: "Hey! You look good. Did you join a health club?" (**Scene 10, line 29**)

After a few days Hun didn't see Kazihiro, Hunt suddenly met Kazihiro in the road and Hunt chased Kazihiro to show that he wanted to see Kazihiro. Then, he pay attention to Kazihiro's condition to make Kazihiro feels happy because Hunt still pays attention to him after they both fight. Hunt also made a joke by asking Kazihiro join a health club or not because Kazihiro looked better than before.

Strategy 2: Exaggerate in interest, approve, sympathy with H

The situation that is done with something exaggerated in written transcript. On the other hand, the speaker wants to show empathy towards the hearer by exaggerating his/her expression. Below is the example that Hunt used in communicating to Kazihiro:

Hunt: "Hey, there we go. Got that settled. Good. A load off my mind. A few more things and I'll get out of your hair, which looks good, I mean that." (**Scene3, line 8**)

Hunt feels too excited when he heard about how Kazihiro understand with what he said, however the way he expressed it is too exaggerated by using repetition words like "there we go, got that settled, good, a load off my mind." Moreover, Hunt seemed that he liked Kazihiro's hairstyle and gave Kazihiro a compliment to make him feels happy.

- Independence strategy

Strategy 1: Minimize threat

The speaker makes the request by minimizing the expression of asking. Below is the example of this type of strategy:

Hunt: "Why can't we just run the plant the way we did before? We did pretty good." (**Scene 1, line 4**)

Hunt requested to run it as they always do, so that he added the word “we did pretty good” in order to avoid the assumption about being selfish because he did not want to replace the policy.

Strategy 2: Apologize

By apologizing, the speaker tries to not interrupt on the hearer’s negative face. Below is the example of this type of strategy:

Hunt: “Can I be frank for a second? I’ve heard a lot of talk about how good the Japanese businessmen are. Frankly... I’m sorry, I don’t get it. I don’t see it, I’m not impressed. Not one iota.” (**Scene 5, line 18**)

Hunt tried to not interrupt Kazihiro’s face, and he asked for an excuse and said sorry for several times because he could not understand about what Kazihiro has said before.

b. Politeness Strategies used by Kazihiro to Hunt

The total of Kazihiro in using politeness strategies is 8 strategies when he speaks to Hunt, 5 strategies of involvement and 3 strategies of independence. Kazihiro used 9 times of involvement strategy and 3 times of independence strategy. Below is the table that shows the type of strategies has been used by Kazihiro either involvement or independence strategy:

Table 4.2 Total Strategies Used by Kazihiro to Hunt

Involvement	Total	Independence	Total
notice or attend to H interests, wants, needs, and goods	1	Be taciturn or silent	1
Claim common point of views, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and empathy	2	Use family names or titles	1
Use given names and nicknames	1	Use own language or dialect	1
be voluble or fluent	3		
use H’s language or dialect	2		
	9		3

- **Involvement Strategy**

Strategy 1: Notice or attend to H interests, wants, needs, and goods

In this part, the speaker has to pay attention to the hearer’s condition or anything which looks that the hearer wants the speaker to notice to it. Below is the example:

Kaz: “I do not blame you. Even though you are their leader.” (**Scene 2, line 5**)

As Hunt stated in the dialogue that Americans are not getting used to wake up in the morning that is why the workers did not want to do mornings exercise before work at that time because it was too early for them. Kazihiro in here tried to understand the position of Hunt because he could not do anything to make his workers want to do mornings exercise before working. Fortunately, Hunt could handle that problem by getting down from the stage, stood in the middle of the workers, and moved his body to make the workers followed him. Hunt still holds his responsible as the leader and also supported his workers to have a spirit in the workplace.

Strategy 2: Claim common point of views, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and empathy

The speaker claims common ground and perspective with the hearer. In here, the speaker wants to satisfy the hearer’s positive face which his or her willingness to be appreciated by the speaker and

usually the speaker gives compliments to the hearer. The speaker also gives an opinion that she/he had same condition to the hearer or experiences what the hearer feels. Below is the example:

Kaz: "I see what you are saying." (**Scene 3, line 7**)

In this context, Kazihiro accepted and understood about what Hunt has said that they should not be burdened by the work. If people work they should not feel stress or depress, just enjoy what you work. In here, indirectly said that Hunt suggested Kazihiro to not think too much about his work because it can bring Kazihiro into a depression.

- Independence Strategy

Strategy 1: Be taciturn or silent

The speaker inclines to be silence to the hearer, in here the speaker does not say something too much to the hearer and he/she just talks something necessary only. Below is the example:

Kaz: "It was a good game. We had fun." (**Scene 4, line 16**)

Kazihiro felt disappoint with American at that time, because one of the American's baseball team has cheated in the game until Mr.Saito fell down and could not walk. Kazihiro in here did not want to say it directly so that he only told to Hunt like that.

Strategy 2: Use family names or titles

The speaker uses a surname or title to the hearer to show that he/she wants to respect the hearer's positive face. Below is the example:

Kaz: "Ah, Mr. Stevenson. What a pleasure." (**Scene 1, line 1**)

Although Kazihiro is Hunt's boss, he called his sub-ordinate with the family names because he wanted to be considered as a professional and he also wanted to be seemed as polite with other people, especially with people in different culture.

After analyzing the data, the writer found 33 utterances in total that conducted politeness strategies. From 33 utterances there are 17 of 20 strategies have been used. Kazihiro made 8 strategies, and Hunt made 13 strategies in the conversation. Kazihiro's utterances mostly sounded like involvement strategy, and Hunt's utterances are also involvement strategy. The writer had counted the frequency and calculated the percentage of each strategy which used in the utterances. The table presented below is the result of the types of politeness strategies each character made.

Table 4.3 Frequency of Types of Politeness Strategies used by Hunt and Kazihiro

Characters	Politeness Strategies				Total of Strategies (34)	
	Involvement		Independence		Total	Percentage
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage		
Kazihiro	9	75%	3	25%	12	100%
Hunt	16	72,73%	6	27,27%	22	100%

From those 12 strategies, Kazihiro used 3 be voluble or fluent strategies of involvement the most when he speaks to Hunt, only one of each independence strategy (use own language and dialect, be taciturn or silent, and use family names or titles). On the other side, Hunt used 5 notices to the hearer's condition strategy of involvement the most when speaks to Kazihiro. Moreover, he used 2 minimize threat and 2 apologize strategies of independence when he speaks to Kazihiro.

From the findings, there are several things that the writer found. First, both Hunt and Kazihiro used "notice or attend to the hearer's (interests, wants, needs, and goods)" strategy the most in the dialogue. It is possible because both characters are played a different role (super-ordinate and sub-ordinate) and also they are from different backgrounds that Hunt is an American, Kazihiro is Japanese. That is why; both of them try to build a good relationship among other by paying attention or notice to each other's wants or needs. In this case, Hunt often used notices to the Hearer type of involvement strategy which is 5 times because he wondered about Kazihiro as the Japanese who tend to be indirect

in the conversation and also Kazihiro is his super-ordinate. That is why, Hunt in here tried to notice or pay attention a lot to his boss because he wants to be considered as friendly and respectful to his boss in order to be promoted too.

Second, the writer found out that Kazihiro used many involvement strategies with the percentage 75% and some independence strategies which are only 25%. While Hunt also used too many involvement strategies when speaking to Kazihiro with the percentage 72,73% and also Hunt used not many independence strategies which is only 27,27%. Based on the Scollon & Scollon (2001) theory that a person in the upper position (super-ordinate) uses involvement strategies in speaking ‘down’ while the person in lower position (sub-ordinate) uses independence strategies in speaking ‘up’, it means that Kazihiro in here fulfilled the requirement of that theory. While Hunt, he used so many involvement strategies when he speaks to his super-ordinate (Kazihiro). However, it is possible that the reason Hunt used many involvement rather than independence because of his cultural background that Hunt is an American who is usually being direct in a communication. In fact, Americans tend to be direct (saying what he/she wants without any hesitates) whereas Japanese people tend to be more polite or indirect (not straightly saying what he/she wants) that when they speak to others (Paltridge, 2012). The writer can see that this movie tried to emphasize more on the cultural background. It is possible because this is only a movie that was engineered by the director of this movie who is an American actor and filmmaker, Ron Howard. So, in here the director wants to compare the differences between Americans and Japanese people.

Conclusion

Through this research, the writer wanted to know about types of politeness strategy made by both characters (Hunt and Kazihiro). There is one theory used for doing the analysis which is the theory on politeness strategies by Scollon & Scollon (2001).

From the result of analysis, the writer concludes that politeness strategies are needed in this movie, especially in different position (sub-ordinate and super-ordinate). The result also shows that all strategies for involvement have been used by both characters and 7 of 10 strategies for independence have been used in total. The writer also found that, in terms of involvement strategies, both characters made “notice to the hearer’s (interests, wants, needs, and goods)” strategy the most. This is probably to show that either sub-ordinate or super-ordinate here want to show that both of them have different cultures and positions so that they try to build a good relationship by paying attention to each other. In terms of their different position, Kazihiro in here fulfilled the requirement, while Hunt still used too many involvement strategies when he speaks to his super-ordinate (Kazihiro) and he did not use more independence strategy. However, it is possible that the reason Hunt used many involvement rather than independence because of his cultural background that Hunt is an American. This movie tried to emphasize more on the cultural background. It is possible because this is only a movie that was engineered by the director of this movie who is an American actor and filmmaker, Ron Howard. So, it shows that the director wants to compare the differences between Americans and Japanese people through this movie and he might be want to show that Americans do not always like they look in daily life. That is why, through this movie the writer can conclude that politeness strategies are needed in communication because it controls a person to behave and face other people.

Through this research, the writer wants to show to the readers that politeness strategy affects people in communication, especially in the cultural differences. It is because the way people talk can affect how their interlocutors respond them. Therefore, the writer encourages future researcher to conduct further studies about politeness strategies, for instance to other movies or between the two main characters in Gung Ho movie to other characters (Hunt to other characters, or Kazihiro to other characters) to broaden and more show up the function of politeness strategies.

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