

THE SPIRIT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION PRESENTED IN MISS GRAYLING'S POLITENESS STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Centering students' life on character education which cultivates virtue is approachable by politeness strategies that transform threatening utterances into something empowering and more appropriate. Therefore, this study investigates politeness strategies used by Miss Grayling in *The Second Form at Malory Towers* written by Enid Blyton, as the principal, who instill students' good character by highlighting their potential and making the suggestion less offensive and aims to connect linguistic concept implication with real issues in education. In answering the research question "How do Miss Grayling's politeness strategies have roles in emphasizing character education?" and "What are the purposes of politeness strategies used by Miss Grayling?" Qualitative content analysis is employed by dissecting the specific parts to make categorization according to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies before data analysis. The results show that Miss Grayling uses giving gifts, asking for a reason, being optimistic, hedging/questioning, and impersonalizing to emphasize the value of character education by emphasizing the institution's generation in educating students, motivating students to use her positive side, encouraging honesty and responsibility, highlighting students' character aside from score result, and emphasizing the importance of wisdom.

Keywords: *politeness strategies, character education, behavior, student, principal*

INTRODUCTION

Education in today's time delineates the presence of valuing the liberation from weak principles in upholding decency besides the standardized academic thing in school (Linge et al., 2019). The reality of education in the present moment strengthens the function of character education. Dodds (2016, as cited in Zurqoni et al., 2018) discovered that character education played a part in reducing negative behavior and enhancing students' insights into the values/characters.

Regarding the effort to degrade improper behavior, Thomas Lickona provides three fundamental marks of character education. The elements include knowing the good, loving the good (Rijal et al., 2022), and acting in good. Knowledge of right and wrong does not have the capability to cover the profound meaning of character education. Instead, the

essence of character education undermines the matter of embedding good habits into students' lives. Moral beliefs put interest in knowledge of the good. Moral attitudes signal a desire to do good. The last is moral behavior that reflect the good deeds actualization. Those three constructs are the main point of character education. The mentioned fundamental ethical principles in character education involves an attempt to understand, care about, and implement it.

To execute the essential principles of character education, Thomas Lickona connected this concept with elements that assign the conscious effort. In other words, the effort in embedding character education requires the students' acknowledgement of this learning process. Therefore, investing the character education into students' life necessitates knowledge socialization.

Socializing the knowledge is functioned by the help of communication (Ismail & Febriyanti, 2022). Communication became the useful tool to deliver the message about the expectations for students. Drawing connection with communication's role, Halliday (2003, as cited in Sapitri et al., 2020) explains how language expression relates to society. Every expression contains the ideational meaning obtained from the real world and the communicative function associated with the speaker's role and attitude. The output of communication and language expressions extend to different applications. One of the applications is politeness. Politeness operates expression in verbal communication which is detectable through speaking aspects ranging from the speech length to speaking volume.

The popularity of the politeness concept came into view when Brown and Levinson constructed its framework. Politeness puts emphasis on two functions. The first function consists of revealing social distance and the difference in the role of relationships, Brown & Levinson (1987, as cited in Indrawati, 2011). As a result, the beneficial aspect of politeness in this context creates clarity in drawing boundaries between the people with higher positions and lower ones. On the contrary, the second function plays a role in using the face of communication in attempting to nurture and save face in communication. The second function aligns with Holmes' argument on politeness. Politeness contributes to creating social harmony and preventing oneself from social conflict. The role of politeness in linguistics requires discourse strategies or linguistic devices that enable perception and evaluation by others due to its purpose of maintaining harmonious relationships (Holmes, 2008). With regards to the social functions in politeness, this concept constructs the convention of communal aspect (Baider et al., 2020). Categorized as a linguistic device and tool to signal social convention, politeness performs the ability to maintain people's good public image. This relates to "face" as the target of the politeness strategy. The "face" as the element of politeness indicates a significant part of this concept. The respect shown is defined as the self-image presented to the public (Kádár, 2017).

It is reasonable that there are two widely known categories of politeness. The categories refer to negative politeness and positive politeness. Negative politeness indicates the highlight of a negative face. Meanwhile, positive politeness supports the

positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish negative and positive politeness based on the specifications. Positive politeness includes claiming a common ground, giving/asking for reasons, including the speaker and hearer in the activity, intensifying the hearer's interest, giving gifts to the hearer, being optimistic, using in-group identity markers, joking, seeking agreements, offering/promising, notice and attend to hearer's interests and needs and presuppose (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Negative politeness includes being indirect, hedging, minimizing imposition, being apologetic, giving deference, and impersonalizing.

Studies of politeness has been widely recognized. They do not limit politeness in terms of observing moving objects in video, but also expand the context to textual content like novel. Widiastuti (2019) conducted the research that has the purpose of exploring what politeness strategies were used by the main characters in novel *The Sun also Rises*. The findings show that the main character in *The Sun also Rises* represents the politeness strategies namely bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. The factors affecting politeness consist of language style, register and domain, slang and solidarity, language, and gender in their conversation. The study conducted by Tenriuji et al. (2021) aims to conduct analyzation of politeness principles employed and how the dialogues in the novel written by Stephen Chbosky reflect them. The primary source to gather data is Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The results of the research include 28 utterances using the maxim of politeness principles that comprises 6 utterances of the tact maxim, 2 utterance of the generosity maxim, 5 utterances of the approbation maxim, 5 utterances of the modesty maxim, 6 utterances of the agreement maxim and 4 utterances of sympathy maxim. Marceline & Mubarak (2022) found the appearance of positive politeness is more than negative politeness strategies in *Goldeline* novel. Pamungkas et al. (2021) concluded that metaphor as a politeness strategy in a novel tetralogy by Ki Padmasusatra enables people to create harmony with all entities. Dewanti (2022) found 100 utterances that represents positive politeness, 59 utterances (off-record), 54 utterances (bald on record), and 50 utterances (negative politeness). Ilyas et al. (2020) disclosed the parties' preferences on employing politeness strategies in *An American Brat*. Pakistani preferred to use positive politeness for showing submissiveness. On the contrary, American employed bald on record politeness strategy to underscore superiority.

The reviewed studies optimize the literary works as sources to elaborate on how politeness strategies are applied. However, politeness in literary works relating to educational context may have been also understudied. Therefore, this study intends to fill in the gaps in other journal articles by exploring the politeness strategies can reflect the alternative to value character education in school.

The research gap becomes significant because this paper issued a novel entitled *The Second Form at Malory Towers* written by Enid Blyton that represents the ideal pattern of the character education establishment. The novel established the setting that supports character education for students who need to get the correction and reinforcement by

employing a politeness strategy. The pattern indicated the importance of the environment that supports the progress in students' characters (Syakur et al., 2022). In accommodating students with a place to build their character, educators can be categorized as the party who is responsible for students (Mahmud et al., 2022). With regard to the educator's role, Miss Grayling the character of this novel embodies the implication of politeness strategy to highlight character education on reinforcing the students' progress despite their shortcomings.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the role of Miss Grayling's (the school principal) politeness strategies in presenting the value of character education in *Second Form at Malory Towers* written by Blyton (2006). Therefore, the research questions are "What are the purposes of politeness strategies used by Miss Grayling?" and "How do Miss Grayling's politeness strategies have roles in emphasizing character education?" The implications of exploring the research questions are giving insight into the alternative to reinforce character education that creates safe place for students to learn from mistake.

METHOD

Content analysis formulates the inferences of textual meaning. Forming a concluding remark from textual meaning is preceded by making sense of the messages implied in texts, images, symbols, or audio data (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017). The content analysis used is qualitative which is identical with focusing on meaning and context.

The process of content analysis includes familiarizing with the data, determining the meaning units and condensed meaning units from the text, forming codes, and developing categories and themes (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Familiarizing the data is the process where the researcher studies the data to understand the content. In other words, the novel content is understood. Determining the meaning units and condensed meaning units involves shortening the long-written sentences. In this step, the important conversations are chosen. Forming codes labels the summarized sentences to connect with meaning and unit. After the important conversations are chosen, they are grouped according to which is the part of politeness strategy. Developing categories and themes that classify the distinctive codes according to the right group is useful for conducting data analysis. Then, in this step, categorized conversations according to politeness strategy are specified based on the sub types and then connect it with the concept of character education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Politeness Strategies to Underline the Institution's Generosity in Focusing on Character Education

Datum 1 (Politeness Strategy: Intensifying hearer's wants and needs)

"Because, Daphne, your last head mistress said that you were not all bad," said Miss Grayling.

"She said that perhaps a fresh start in a fine school like this, with its traditions of service for others, for justice, kindness and truthfulness, might help you to cancel out the bad and develop the good. And I like to give people a chance."

A conversation happens between Miss Grayling and Daphne. Daphne made a mistake. Miss Grayling gave Daphne's understanding of the purpose of Malory Towers for her life. When Miss Grayling told Daphne, *"Because, Daphne, your last headmistress said that you were not all bad"*, the politeness strategy is categorized as minimizing the imposition. Minimizing imposition represents a politeness strategy that aims to soften the inappropriate directness. Applying minimizing imposition is considered a negative politeness strategy Brown & Levison (1987, as cited in, Sadeghogli & Niroomand, 2016). This notion can be seen from the fact that it is not true to rationalize Daphne's lack of a good reputation in the previous school. To maintain Daphne's self-image, the imposition is neutralized by indirect language. The indirect language implicitly uttered that Daphne's behavior is not good, Miss Grayling told her that she is not that bad instead of showing that her reputation is not *"all bad"*. However, the minimizing imposition does not give the full context of this conversation because she continued the dialogue by saying *"She said that perhaps a fresh start in a fine school like this, with its traditions of service for others, for justice, kindness and truthfulness, might help you to cancel out the bad and develop the good. And I like to give people a chance."* Miss Grayling intends to lessen the imposition because she would like to emphasize her generosity in giving Daphne's second chance.

The politeness strategy represents emphasizing the hearer's wants and needs. The hearer's want and need is her approval that she deserves to improve her character. Therefore, intensifying the hearer's wants and needs is categorized as positive politeness. Positive politeness happens in this context when the barrier that prevents people from showing closeness is removed (Fauziati, 2013). As making the closeness becomes clearer, it would be more probable for a leader like Miss Grayling to assist Daphne with what she wants and needs to hear.

Employing minimizing the imposition and the hearer's want and needs reflects Miss Grayling's capacity to focus on how Daphne can experience maturation. Miss Grayling as the person who has a leadership position utilizes her power to highlight that cultivating virtue is important because it marks the identity of character education.

Politeness Strategies to Motivate Student by Highlighting Her Positive Side

Datum 2 (Politeness strategy: giving gifts)

"And yet you have done a very brave thing," said Miss Grayling.

"Look at me, please, Daphne. The girls admire you today—they call you a heroine."

"You have plenty of good in you!" Daphne had raised her head and was looking at Miss Grayling.

Despite Daphne's unpleasant behavior, Miss Grayling emphasized a positive face. Positive face refers to admitting someone's desire to receive appreciation and approval of the action (Feng, 2015). Although Miss Grayling had a conversation with Daphne because

of the problematic behavior, her participation in guiding the student needs to be complemented by showing support. Miss Grayling supports Daphne to continue her good deeds.

Giving gifts including showing appreciation and being optimistic are associated with a positive politeness strategy Brown & Levinson (1987, as cited in Njuki & Ireri, 2021). Compliment is a part of the politeness strategy (Dirgeyasa, 2015). In this case, Miss Grayling compliments Daphne by saying that she is brave. When Miss Grayling utters, *"You have plenty of good in you"*, she refers Daphne as someone who is capable of preserving her positive side.

Miss Grayling's politeness strategy highlights the importance of character education because she motivates Daphne to have bravery. In relation her functional aspect, while implementing politeness strategy, Miss Grayling has objectives to guide students by knowledge, inhibit intention, and actualize good which characterizes the core value of character education according to Thomas Lickona. Connecting with the context of the story, compliment (the politeness strategy) strengthens the emphasis on highlighting reinforced behavior (Dirgeyasa, 2015). Reinforcing behavior can be interpreted as the spirit of character education. Character education is inseparable from focusing on the character. Reinforced good character includes what composes the strengths of a person (Wagner & Ruch, 2015). Miss Grayling encourages Daphne and even the reader to underline that mistakes may be part of a flaw, but the character's strength also plays a role in developing the good side. In other words, Blyton intended to represent that to behave well, people can follow the examples from their strengths.

Politeness Strategy to Encourage Honesty and Responsibility

Datum 3 (Politeness strategy: being optimistic)

"Well, you have the choice," said Miss Grayling getting up. "Either I send you home without any more ado—or you put yourself in the hands of your school fellows. It is a hard thing to do, but if you really want to make amends, you will do it. (minimizing imposition). You have some good in you. Now is your chance to show it, even if it means being braver than you were last night!"

The first politeness strategy is minimizing imposition. This strategy considered as negative politeness strategy which aims to avoid offense Brown & Levinson (1987, as cited in Suyono & Andriyanti, 2021). The discussed politeness strategy intends to avoid offense because minimizing imposition weakens offensiveness degree. When imposition is minimized, the degree of commanding request appears to be less-threatening (Nhung, 2014). Minimizing imposition is reflected in *"Well, you have the choice,"* and *"Either I send you home without any more ado—or you put yourself in the hands of your school fellows. It is a hard thing to do, but if you really want to make amends, you will do it"* centers on shaping the perception of Daphne's freedom to decide. Minimizing imposition can be connected with negative face. Negative face recognizes the hearers' desire to be accepted in terms of being free to choose what they want.

Aside from minimizing imposition, the second politeness strategy is being optimistic. Miss Grayling thinks that Ellen has a chance to bring a better version of herself. From Miss Grayling's conversation with Ellen, being optimistic puts positivity regarding valuing the speakers' potential. Being optimistic highlights the hearer's positive face because it is a form of accepting the desire to be seen as someone that has ability. Miss Grayling communicates to Daphne about the necessity of telling the truth. As the principal, Miss Grayling expects Daphne to show responsibility. In addition to signaling the importance of responsibility, she realized that Daphne needed to make the decision by herself.

Politeness Strategies to Emphasize Student's Character Education Aside from Exam Result

Datum 4 (Politeness strategy: Intensifying hearer wants and needs and asking for reasons)

"Darrell told me, but told no one else. So, you need not worry. But I want to know why you did."

"There is something you are worrying about, Ellen, and these headaches of yours won't go until you are at peace with yourself and have lost whatever worry it is you have."

"I did need to cheat," said Ellen, in a small voice. "My brains wouldn't work anymore. And I got these headaches. I knew I wouldn't even pass the tests—and the girls that night accused me of being a thief, which I wasn't— and I got all hopeless and thought that I might as well be a cheat if they all thought I was a thief!"

"I see," said Miss Grayling.

"Did it matter so much?" asked Miss Grayling, gently.

"Yes," said Ellen. "I didn't want to let my people down"

"Not quite!" said Miss Grayling, feeling very much relieved to find that simple overwork was at the root of Ellen's trouble, and worry about what her family would think.

"I shall write your parents a letter to tell them that you have worked hard and done well, but that you are overstrained and must have a real holiday when it comes. By next term, you will be quite fresh again and you will have forgotten all this and be ready to rush up to the top of the form!"

The context of the story reveals that Ellen got caught cheating by Miss Grayling. Ellen's mistake affects Miss Grayling's curiosity to grow stronger. Although Ellen behaves dishonestly, Miss Grayling does not directly release the accusation to Ellen. Miss Grayling guides Ellen to tell the truth about her case steadily. She, as the principal, employs intensifying hearer wants and needs. Her further action asks the reason why Ellen cheats. The shift from knowing that Ellen cheated to considering that this student deserves to be heard is associated with positive politeness strategies. Miss Grayling intensifies Ellen's wants and needs by saying *"Nobody knows except Darrell and myself,"* and *"Darrell told me, but told no one else. So, you need not worry"*. The principal informs Ellen that no one has been told about her case, so she does not need to feel ashamed. In this case, Ellen's wants and needs connect with the feeling of being free from embarrassment which makes her not reluctant to confess everything.

Afterwards, Miss Grayling asks for reason with a purpose to know more about the underlying issue behind her misdeed to make the assumption free from personal subjectivity. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), asking for reason is one of the politeness strategies. Miss Grayling still thinks that it is good to hear from Ellen's perspective. This marks the positive politeness strategy that negotiates with hearer to

recognize hearer's reflexivity. Asking for reasons is defined as a politeness strategy that is useful for considering hearer's rationality in making a decision (Nurmawati et al., 2019).

Miss Grayling guessed that Ellen did not express her problem properly which resulted in unresolved problems by assuming *"There is something you are worrying about, Ellen, and these headaches of yours won't go until you are at peace with yourself and have lost whatever worry it is you have."* The politeness strategy used is intensifying hearer's wants and needs. Intensifying hearer's wants and needs contribute to mutual understanding.

Miss Grayling found that Ellen feels desperate because she is fear of not passing the test in the student's statement *"I knew I wouldn't even pass the tests"*. In addition, Ellen expresses her concern about disappointing people. Miss Grayling reassures Ellen that in her mistake, there is an acceptable part which is her effort to make everyone satisfied with the test result. Miss Grayling replies with full understanding by intensifying hearer's wants and needs. As she shows empathy towards Ellen, Miss Grayling helps her write the letter for the parent. In telling the upcoming letter content, Miss Grayling respects Ellen's hard work. Respecting Ellen's hard work is categorized as giving gifts (giving compliment). It is important to note that giving gift's output not only the tangible aspect, but also intangible like the expectation to be admired (Prasasti & Sutrisna, 2020). From the coverage of the whole dialogue section above, Miss Grayling underlines the importance of politeness in guiding the students. In the process of building trust with her student, Miss Grayling does the necessary action to make Ellen comfortable in telling everything. The necessary part consists of reassuring that only Darrell and she know about Ellen's mistake. When Miss Grayling gave feedback to Ellen with understanding instead of resentment, she used to seek agreement as a way of carrying out politeness strategies. On the other hand, asking for reason signals openness to receive Ellen's opinion. Miss Grayling also reduced the tendency of intense imposition by asking *"Did it matter so much?"* in order to neutralize Ellen's anxiousness.

Along with Miss Grayling's presenting the present condition, this headmaster recognizes the importance of being optimist. Displaying optimism becomes the part of positive politeness strategy. The categorization belongs to positive politeness strategy because showing optimism is caused by speaker's intention to reinforce the hearer's positive face (Takayuki, 2020).

Miss Grayling reminds Ellen that she values students' hard work. In this dialogue section, little is known about when Miss Grayling's anger intensifies. Notwithstanding, the essential part is conveying that students' genuine persistence in doing the exam helps them focus on integrity other than the number alone. Cheating appeared to be strategic. However, Miss Grayling expressed that she respected students who strive in their academic struggle instead of cheating to get a good result.

Politeness Strategies to Emphasize the Importance of Wisdom

Datum 5 (Politeness strategy: Questioning and Impersonalizing)

“And you think that if someone does a brave deed quite suddenly, then he or she could never do a mean one?” asked Miss Grayling.

... We all have good and bad in us, and we have to strive all the time to make the good cancel out the bad”

Miss Grayling's politeness strategy namely questioning is connected with her intention to challenge a student who thinks that one brave deed proves Daphne does not make mistake. Questioning is categorized as a negative politeness strategy. Questioning has a good impact on not assuming before the hearer tell what is on her mind. This clears the trait of negative politeness strategy which involves the modification of threatening utterances to soften ones.

She also uses impersonalize strategy to emphasize that even herself, as an adult, has good and bad side. Impersonalize strategy is the part of negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Negative politeness attempts to be thoughtful of offensive attitude. The impersonalization happens when Miss Grayling does not want the hearer to perceive that talking about human who tends to make mistake despite having good side only refers to the hearer. Miss Grayling does not want the hearer to think having vulnerabilities within each person is targeted to attack the hearer's personal character.

Miss Grayling implements character education by realizing that developing the strengths in every person plays a part in removing the weaknesses slowly. The character education in this conversation is presented to what Miss Grayling says to the hearer when she thinks Daphne does not make a mistake because she has shown bravery. Miss Grayling's negative politeness from questioning the hearer's argument to making the problem as a general part in life reflects her intention to deliver the wisdom in avoiding deception.

CONCLUSION

Miss Grayling implements politeness strategies, such as giving gifts, intensifying the hearer's needs and wants, minimizing imposition, asking for reasons, questioning, and impersonalizing. Every category functions differently according to the planned purposes. Giving gifts emphasizes the strengths possessed by the students to motivate them to keep improving in showing their good parts. Intensifying the hearer's needs and wants is used to negotiate with the hearer to accept Miss Grayling's suggestion. Minimizing imposition is useful to persuade the hearer to follow Miss Grayling's guidance in having a good attitude. Asking for reasons is used to let the hearer know that Miss Grayling wants to listen from their perspective. Questioning attempts to revise students' fallacy in making assumptions. Impersonalizing is employed to make the criticism of the hearer's argument not seen as a personal attack. All politeness strategies have benefits in presenting the value of character education. They show Miss Grayling's effort in guiding students. By noticing Miss Grayling's politeness strategies, it is known that she puts emphasis on honesty and responsibility.

The practical implication is targeted for principal, teacher, or parents. They can frame the mistake not as the thing that threatens their development. Instead, mistake can be

delivered with politeness strategy to not make the conversation look demotivating. Furthermore, politeness strategy employed by Miss Grayling convey students' progress regardless of their mistakes. This is also applicable in real life context because educating young people is also a matter of informing what they have accomplished rather than a mere of telling the area that needs improvement.

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