

**A Pragmatic Study of Politeness Strategies in Noam Chomsky's Interviews in
2022.**

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Abstract

Politeness is an interpersonal system that facilitates people's interaction .It reflects participants' awareness of each others' needs, desires and interests. Moreover, it helps managing the conversation in harmony .One form of utilizing politeness is expressing the personal opinion while evaluating, criticizing, or commenting specific issues, especially in politics. To this end , the researcher opines to choose latest Noam Chomsky's political interviews and detecting the use of politeness strategies by him, while criticizing, commenting or estimating the current circumstances .The researcher analyzes eight extract from seven political interviews with Noam Chomsky in 2022 basing on Brown and Levinson's modal of politeness (1987). The findings of the study indicates that the most frequently politeness super strategy is positive politeness.Furthermore, , the dominant politeness sub strategies are detected by the researcher . Noam Chomsky uses specific politeness sub strategies more than others , these are : being ironic, including the hearer in the activity ,Intensify hearer's interest, needs, and goods.

1. Introduction

Since the world we live in is centered around politics, it is important to pay an attention to political interviews, speeches , and even the stand out political critics like Noam Chomsky (NC). Accordingly, the present study seeks politeness strategies in NC'S latest political interviews that occurs in 2022. The purpose of this study is finding answer to the following questions: what politeness super strategy is utilized most frequently by NC in the selected data , and what are the dominant sub strategies that NC employs in the elected interviews. For the sake of answering these questions, the researcher detects a simplified literature review about politeness. Brown and Levinson's modal (1987) is utilized by the researcher to make the analysis. Furthermore, a synthesized overview about pragmatics is presented in this study .

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatics

Gass et al . (1989 :38) elucidate that pragmatics seeks how one sentence has more than one meaning relying of the contextual factors of its use . Birne (2013:2) exposed pragmatics as the study of the "inferred meaning" which distinguishes this field from other field . In other words, Birne sees the context is the key by which the meaning can be understood correctly or misunderstood wrongly.

Yule (1996:3) regards pragmatics as the study of what is "unsaid" but communicated. Viz , it seeks what the speaker wants to communicate even if it is not plain .This can be done by going beyond the literal meaning to make inferences relying on the contextual factors of the utterance. There are specific phenomena that receive pragmatists' interests like: cooperative principle (CP), presupposition, speech acts, deixis, and politeness which is going to be explained in the next section (2.2).

2.2 Politeness

Allot (2010 :141-149) reveals that giving a universal and stable definition of politeness is impossible, because it is highly associated with culture. However, he exposes that general understanding of the term politeness is the act of behaving respectfully with others .

Yule (1996:60) states that politeness can be regard as a system of harmonious interaction between people .The main construction of this system is participants' awareness of each other's self image , needs , and interests. He adds that politeness is equal to "etiquette and civility". An important term in politeness is "face". It represents people's inner image that they want others to identify. It is preposed for the first time by Goffman as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact " (Van Dijk,1997: 50) .

Brown and Levinson classify face into positive and negative. The positive face is the desire to be a member of the group. The negative face is the desire of not being imposed by other members. Consequently, they coined the terms face threatening act and face (FTA) and face saving act (FSA). FTA is an act that represents a threats to the addressee's negative face like challenging his / her opinion or demonstrating the disagreement with the addressee. Brown and Levinson (1987) set out four politeness strategies which are :bald on record, off record, negative and positive politeness and each on of them has its sub strategies (Van Dijk ,1997: 50).

2.2.1 Bald on Record

In this the strategy the speaker doesn't use any expression to lessen the FTA on the addressee .It can be seen in teachers' language in the class or in an emergency situation (Van Dijk,1997: 51) .

2.2.1 Positive Politeness

A strategy in which the speaker demonstrates an attention to save the addressee's positive face (Van Dijk,1997: 51) .Brown and Levinson (1987:103-129) set fifteen sub strategies of positive politeness including:

1. Giving hints to the addressee's
2. Fulfilling the addressee's wants and desires
3. Assuming reciprocity
4. Giving reasons
5. Including the addressee in the activity
6. Being optimistic
7. Giving an offer or promise
8. Assuming speaker's knowledge of the addressee's concerns and wants
9. Joking
10. Presenting presupposition or a common ground knowledge
11. Seeking agreement
12. Avoiding disagreement
13. Utilizing in group language
14. Intensify the addressee's interests , goods and wants
15. Exaggerating interests , and sympathy with the addressee

2.2.3 Negative politeness

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A strategy in which the speaker endeavors to please the addressee's negative face by paying an attention to his/her desire to get liberty of being imposed by others (Van Dijk,1997: 51). Brown and Levinson (1987:130-210) state a set of sub strategies of negative politeness including:

1. Using nominalization
2. Presenting the FTA as a general rule
3. Apologization
4. Giving reference
5. Reducing the imposition
6. Being conventionally indirect
7. Using Hedging
8. Be pessimistic

2.2.4 Off record

A strategy in which the speaker conveys his communicative intention indirectly to minimize the threat on the addressee's face (Van Dijk,1997: 52).Brown and Levinson (1987:211-225) assume a set of the off record politeness sub strategies including:

1. Giving hints
2. Giving clues
3. Presupposition
4. Understatement
5. Overstatement
6. Utilizing tautologie
7. Being ironic
8. Utalizing rhetorical question
9. Being ambiguous
10. Overgeneralization

3. Methodology

Merged methodology is employed by the researcher in the current paper. The presented data is analyzed qualitatively based on Brown and Levinson (1987) model of politeness strategies. Moreover, the quantitative analysis is done by using statistical analysis as the following :

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of times of each strategy} \times 100}{\text{The whole number of the strategies}}$$

The data is represented by seven interview with NC by different interviewers. They are all occur at 2022. Generally, Data description can be summarized in Table(1):

The Contextual Factors	Noam Chomsky's Interviews
Setting and Scene	The selected data are online political interviews with NC taken from NC personal archive. Hence , the place is his accommodation place which is Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S. The researcher elects the interviews that occur in 2022.

Participants	The participants are NC and the interviewers of seven interviews that tare chosen by the researcher which are : Amanda Mars, Ezra Klein, David Barsamian, and four interviews by C.J.Polychroniou
End (aim)	Negotiating political issues that cares world sake in general
Act Sequence	Generally, since they are online interview , there are no commercial breaks and the times of the interviews doesn't go behind 90 minutes.
Key	Political discourse, current circumstances, serious issues.
Instrumentalities	The data is political discourse that verbally spoken and transcript.
Norm	There is no direct and strict norms between the interviewer and NC .Only the interviewers present the questions and NC starts presenting his criticism and answer.
Genre	Political discourse

Table (1) :Data Description Based on Hymes' 1974 Model

4. The Analysis

Extract _1_

"**Barsamian:** In an article in Truthout, you quote Eisenhower's 1953 "Cross of Iron" speech. What did you find of interest there?

Chomsky: You should read it and you'll see why it's interesting. It's the best speech he ever made. This was 1953 when he was just taking office. Basically, what he pointed out was that militarization was a tremendous attack on our own society. He —or whoever wrote the speech — put it pretty eloquently. One jet plane means this many fewer schools and hospitals. Every time we're building up our military budget, we're attacking ourselves."

The Analysis

1.The General Context

This extract belongs to an interview with NC occurs at the 16th of June, 2022 .In this extract , they talk about NC'S political article in which he mentions a quotation of Eisenhower's speech (he is the US president number 34 in 1953) .

2.Politeness

In this extract , NC doesn't want to give the actual reason behind choosing president Eisenhower's quote . Rather , he tries to intensify the hearer's interest to read the speech by himself by praising it. Viz , despite his unwilling to give the actual answer , he pays an attention to his addressee's positive face by using positive politeness .

Extract _2_

"**Amandaa Mars :**Has the Biden administration been more progressive than you expected?

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Noam Chomsky: Well, I didn't expect much, frankly, but the domestic programs have been better than I expected. Actually, to a large extent, they were designed by Bernie Sanders, representing the more progressive wing of the base of the Democratic party. He has an important position as a director in the department of the budget that sets up the programs. The major Biden program [Build Back Better], the one that's being thought about right now, was initiated by Sanders."

The Analysis

1.The General Context

This extract belongs to an interview with NC occurs at 25th of January, 2022. The addressee is Amanda Mars who is the interviewer. In this extract, the interviewer seeks whether Biden's administration is progressive more or less than NC's anticipations.

2.Politeness

Negative politeness is illustrated by NC's being conventionally indirect. Impliedly, he wants to say that he doesn't see Biden such a professional president that he anticipates a lot from him. Besides, he impersonalizes his opinion and judge about who designs the domestic programs. Instead of saying Biden doesn't make his domestic programs, he says it as "*Actually, to a large extent, they were designed by Bernie Sanders,...*", to mitigate the FTA. Additionally, when NC says "Well, I didn't expect much, frankly," he use off record politeness in that he tries to be ironic. He tries to convey his evaluation of Biden impliedly in order not to seem too imposed.

Extract -3-

"Amanda Mars :.Do you consider yourself a pragmatic thinker?

Noam Chomsky: .We should do what we can do, not seek to do what we can't do. There's no point in romantic gestures, which are going to not only fail, but lead to the worst outcomes. We have to face the world as it actually is, and act in ways which will improve it, overcome problems and lead to a better world. I had friends, back in the '60s, who decided they wanted to have a revolution. So they would go out to a factory, say, the General Electric factory, and hand out Mao's Little Red Book at the gates of the factory, to organize the working class for a revolution. Well, you can imagine what happened. That's not the way we bring about change. What they did is strengthen support for reaction, and support for the war. You have to face the world as it is, not the way you would like it to be. You try to create the world that you would like, but by facing the world as it is,"

The Analysis

1.The General Context

In this extract, the interviewer tries to know about NC's being a pragmatic thinker. According to Oxford dictionary pragmatic thinker in politics means thinking in a practical and realistic way for the sake of solving problems rather than relying on specific ideas and theories that can't be applied on the real world.

2.Politeness

Accordingly to the researcher's acquaintance of NC'S interviews, he tries as far as possible to stay away from any personal information even if it is related to politics. Consequently , in this extract to tries not to give the honest answer without being impolite .That is why he switches the topic to talk about the responsibility of facing the world as it is and trying to solve the problems in a realistic thinking by using the inclusive pronoun "we" in his utterance to leave an impression that the responsibility is distributed upon all parties including him. Consequently, the positive politeness is utilized.

Extract -4-

"C.J. Polychroniou: After months of fighting, it's obvious that the invasion is not going according to the Kremlin's plans, hopes and expectations. NATO figures have claimed that Russian forces have already suffered as many deaths as they did during the entire duration of the Afghan war, and the position of the Zelenskyy government now seems to be "peace with victory." Obviously, the West's support for Ukraine is key to what's happening on the ground, both militarily and in terms of diplomatic solutions. Indeed, there is no clear path to peace, and the Kremlin has stated that it is not seeking to end the war by May 9 (known as Victory Day, which marks the Soviets' role in defeating Nazi Germany). Don't Ukrainians have the right to fight to death before surrendering any territory to Russia, if they choose to do so?

Noam Chomsky: To my knowledge, no one has suggested that Ukrainians don't have that right. Islamic Jihad also has the abstract right to fight to the death before surrendering any territory to Israel. I wouldn't recommend it, but it's their right"

The Analysis

1.The General Context

This extract is taken from an interview with NC that occurs at 4th of May 2022. NC is interview by C.J. Polychroniou who is the addressee also. The core of this extract is the war between Ukrainian and Russia and how Ukrainians need to be supported by other countries including US to defend their land.

2.Politeness

Avoiding disagreement is a sub strategy that NC uses in this extract for the sake of saving the addressee's positive face. No one can prevent Ukrainians from defending their country, even other countries , it is a fact . So, he doesn't want to seem against what the addressee says .He tries to avoid disagreement as possible to be in harmony with the interviewer.

Extract-5-

"C.J. Polychroniou: With the rise of Donald Trump to power, white supremacy and authoritarianism returned to mainstream politics. But isn't it the case that the U.S. was never immune to fascism

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Noam Chomsky: What do we mean by “fascism”? We have to distinguish what’s happening in the streets, very visibly, from ideology and policy, more remote from immediate inspection. Fascism in the streets is Mussolini’s Blackshirts and Hitler’s Brownshirts: violent, brutal, destructive. The U.S. has surely never been immune from that. The sordid record of “Indian removal” and slavery mutating to Jim Crow needs no recounting here."

The Analysis

1.The General Context

This excerpt belongs to an interview with NC occurs at the 8th of December, 2022. The addressee is C.J. Polychroniou who is the interviewer .In this extract, the interviewer tries to know NC'S view about Trump's management of US which is as the interviewer sees near to fascism.

2.Politeness

NC'S use of the rhetorical question is an indication of his employing to off record politeness. . Indirectly, he wants to correct the addressee's understanding of the meaning of "fascism."Add to that , positive politeness can be seen in his attempting not to disagrees the addressee view.

Extract -6-

" **Ezra Klein** : You’re an anarchist. How do you define anarchism?

Noam Chomsky:Anarchism, the way I understand it, is pretty close to truism. And I think everybody, if they think about it, will accept at least this much. We begin with assuming that any structure of authority and domination has to justify itself. It’s not self-justifying. It has a burden of proof. It has to show that it’s legitimate. If you’re taking a walk with your kid, and the kid runs into the street, and you grab their arm and pull them back, that’s an exercise of authority. But it’s legitimate. You can have a justification, and there are such cases where there is justification. But if you look closely, most of them do not. Most of them are what David Hume, Edward Bernays, Walter Lippmann, Adam Smith and others have been talking about over the centuries. Namely, illegitimate authority. Well, illegitimate authorities should be exposed, challenged and overcome. That’s true in all of life."

The Analysis

1.The General Context

This extract is taken from an interview with NC occurs at 23rd of January,2022. The addressee is Ezra Klein who is the interviewer . In this extract, the interviewer tries to reveal NC'S vision about anarchism.

2. Politeness

Negative politeness is seen in this extract when NC expresses his personal view in defining pragmatics by using hedging. This can be embodied when he says "*the way I understand it, is pretty close to truism. And I think everybody, if they think about it, will accept at least this*

much". Moreover, his use of the inclusive pronoun "we" is an indication of his awareness of his addressee's positive face by including him in the activity.

Extract -7-

"C.J. Polychroniou :Western governments, mainstream opposition parties, including the Labour Party in U.K., and corporate media alike have embarked on a chauvinistic anti-Russian campaign. The targets include not only Russia's oligarchs but musicians, conductors and singers, and even football owners such as Roman Abramovich of Chelsea FC. Russia has even been banned from Eurovision in 2022 following the invasion. This is the same reaction that the corporate media and the international community in general exhibited towards the U.S. following its invasion and subsequent destruction of Iraq, wasn't it?

Noam Chomsky:Your wry comment is quite appropriate. And we can go on in ways that are all too familiar."

The General Context

1.The Analysis

This extract is taken from an interview with NC by C.J. Polychroniou .It occurs at 1st March , 2022.In this excerpt ,the interviewer links what happens in Ukraine with what happens in Iraq .He sees a similarity between what Russia makes with Ukrainian people and what US makes with Iraq.

2.Politeness

NC demonstrates his attention and care of the interviewer's positive face by stating that his comment is wry and appropriate. In other words, he pays an attention to his addressee's needs and interests.

Extract -8

"C.J. Polychroniou: :Assuming that all diplomatic undertakings fail, is Russia really in a position to occupy an entire country the size of Ukraine? Couldn't Ukraine become Putin's Afghanistan? Indeed, back in December 2021, the head of the Russian Academy of Science's Center for Ukrainian Research, Viktor Mironenko, warned that Ukraine could become another Afghanistan. What are your thoughts on this matter? Hasn't Putin learned any lessons from Afghanistan?

Noam Chomsky:If Russia does occupy Ukraine, its miserable experience in Afghanistan will resemble a picnic in the park."

The Analysis

1.The General Context

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This extract belongs to an interview with NC that occurs at 8th of March, 2022. NC is interviewed by C.J. Polychroniou. In this extract, the interviewer talks about the possibility of transforming Ukraine to another Afghanistan by Russia.

2. Politeness

Off record and negative politeness are illustrated in this extract . Negative politeness is illustrated by NC's uses of "if clause " to hedge his opinion and not to seem too imposed . Besides, his being ironic when he says "*its miserable experience in Afghanistan will resemble a picnic in the park*" is a reference of the crimes and bad treatment that Russia practices with Afghanistan with pleasure as they are making a picnic not occupying a country .

5. Results of Analysis

Accordingly to the statistical analysis in Table (2) , the most frequently used politeness super strategy is positive politeness. It amounts 41.6% On the other side, the second rank is given to negative politeness which amounts 33.3%. Lastly, off record is about 25% which represents the lower super strategy.

Additionally, Table (3) , makes it clear that the most dominant politeness sub strategies are : being ironic, including the hearer in the activity, intensify hearer's interest, needs, and goods.

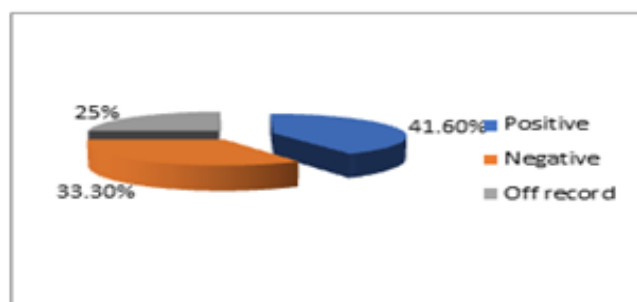


Figure (1): Chi Square Politeness Super

Politeness Super	Fr.	Pr.
Strategies		
Positive	5	41.6%
Negative	4	33.3%
Off record	3	25%
Total	12	99.9

Table(2): Politeness Super Strategies

Positive	Fr.	Pr.	Negative	Fr.	Pr.	Off record	Fr.	Pr.
Avoiding disagreement	1	20%	Being conventionally indirect	1	25%	Being ironic	2	66.6%

Intensify hearer's interest, needs, and goods	2	40%	Impersonal constructions	1	25%	Rhetorical question	1	33.3%
Including the hearer in the activity	2	40%	Hedge	2	50%			
Total	5	100%		4	100%		3	99.9%

Table (3): Politeness Sub –Strategies that are used by NC

6.Conclusions

Relying on data analysis and the findings of the study, important points are concluded. Firstly, politeness represents such a significant system that manages giving comments , criticism , or evaluating others in such a way that doesn't affect the harmony of the conversation. It is revealed that the most frequently super strategy that NC uses in the selected data is positive politeness. However, negative politeness is given the second rank , and the third rank is for off record politeness while on record is not utilized at all by NC in this data. Secondly, behind each super strategy, there are sub strategies detected by the researcher to find which the dominant one. Accordingly, it is revealed that being ironic, including the hearer in the activity ,intensify hearer's interest, needs, and goods are the dominant sub strategies that NC utilizes in the selected interviews while expressing his view.

The current study contributes in widening the vision of utilizing politeness strategies in political interviews. It is anticipated that the present study helps those who are interested in presenting their personal view honestly without causing a threat to the addressee's face or seems to be impolite. However, the findings of the current study are limited to NC 's interviews .So, it may be interested for those who care NC interviews and vision of the world. As such , the present study may open the door for more future studies about detecting politeness strategies in NC's speeches and paying the attention to such fabulous personalities' speeches to be studied.

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Appendix (1) The Selected Interviews

Extracts	Names of Interviews	Date of Interviews	Interviewee	Interviewers	Hyperlink
1	Chomsky and Barsamian, In Ukraine, Diplomacy Has Been Ruled Out "Chronicles of Dissent"	June 16, 2022	Noam Chomsky	David Barsamian	https://chomsky.info/20220616/
2,3	Noam Chomsky: 'American democracy is in very serious danger'	January 25, 2022	Noam Chomsky	Amanda Mars	https://chomsky.info/20220125/
4	Chomsky: US Is Prioritizing Its Jockeying With Russia, Not Ukrainians' Lives	May 4, 2022	Noam Chomsky	C.J.Polychroniou	https://chomsky.info/20220504
5	Noam Chomsky: "We're on the Road to a Form of Neofascism "	December 8, 2022	Noam Chomsky	C.J.Polychroniou	https://chomsky.info/20221208/
6	Noam Chomsky on democracy, lockdowns, climate change and nuclear war	January 23, 2022.	Noam Chomsky	Ezra Klein	https://chomsky.info/20220123/
7	Noam Chomsky: US Military Escalation Against Russia Would Have No Victors	March 1, 2022	Noam Chomsky	C.J.Polychroniou	https://chomsky.info/20220301
8	Noam Chomsky: A No-Fly Zone Over Ukraine Could Unleash Untold Violence			C.J.Polychroniou:	https://chomsky.info/20220308/