

# Politeness Strategies Used by President Barack Obama Speech

Putri Anzeli Simangunsong<sup>1</sup>

Christina N Saragi<sup>2\*</sup>

Kammer Sipayung<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup> English Education Study Program Faculty of teacher training and education, University of HKBP Nommensen, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: [Christina.saragi@uhn.ac.id](mailto:Christina.saragi@uhn.ac.id)

## Abstract

Politeness strategy is a behavior that shows a friendly attitude in communicating with others, thus creating a good relationship. The purpose of this research is to find out the types of politeness strategies and the most dominant type contained in Obama's speech. The research design in this study is descriptive qualitative research. The data were taken from Barack Obama's speech. The results of data analysis show that, there are 124 utterances containing politeness strategies to be analyzed in this study. There are four types of politeness strategies in Barack Obama's speech, namely Bald on record (10%), positive politeness (59%), negative politeness (10%), and off record (21%). The four types found are realized into twenty-five sub-categorizations, namely: Allow something, Greetings and Farewells, Detect the listener's (Interests, wants, needs, and goods), Exaggerate (Interest, Approval, Sympathy listener), Engage listeners by telling a good story, Ask for approval, Avoid Disputes, Increase and emphasize community equality, The speaker knows and cares about the listener's wishes, Offers and Appointments, Be optimistic, Give or ask for reasons, Assumptions or claims of reciprocity, Be conventionally indirect, Be Pessimistic, Minimize Coercion, Give Respect, Impersonality of Speaker and Listener, Providing Relevant Cue Instructions, Overstate, Use Tautology, Be Ambiguous, Being Vague, Over – Generalize.

**Keywords:** *Politeness strategy, Speech, President*

## Introduction

Language is a tool for communication; it is one of the most essential human needs. As a result, language is used in interpersonal communication to build effective relationships. (Abdulameer 2019) Language is the main communication mechanism which people express meaning through written, spoken, and sign language (Sipayung et al. 2021). Language and communication allow humans to understand things related to their society. Language and the meaning of society are intertwined. Every society around the world has rules that govern polite communication. This is important as it creates comfort in interacting with others and having a deeper socio-cultural connection. When using language, there are many things to learn, including how to behave politely.

Barack Obama is a public figure who has a great influence on the world, every time Barack Obama speaks all the people can trust, be heard, be noticed, and be proud of the community because the character of a president is very well-prepared. Politeness in speech can increase popularity and boost the popularity and image of a president towards his people, his friends, and his political opponents, so that every Utterance he uses will raise the attention of many people, especially if articles about Obama are published in journals, there will be a lot of value from other studies. The speaking style

of a public figure must have a positive, good, and motivating use of grammar so that the public figure can become a role model for regular grammar because it will be highlighted. This makes researchers interested in researching Politeness strategies in Barack Obama's speech because I found a lot of data containing Politeness strategies.

The purpose of this study is to find the types of politeness strategies and the dominant types contained in Barack Obama's speech according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, the application and analysis of the Politeness Strategy in President Barack Obama's Speech, because the focus of the research is how this strategy is implemented, created, and functions, this is related to differences in speech and the use of language used, so researchers must understand the meaning of the character's condition in its Pragmatics Context because Pragmatics must deal with relationships between language and context. Language helps us make decisions, resolve most disputes, create laws, share research results, and articulate new possibilities. We become more than just language experts in leadership by learning concepts like vision, strategy, and culture. Kockelmans' theory (Suprpto et al. 2021) says that, because humans speak, "language is not essentially exclusive to communication; it has a more important role in the web of experience."

Research on Pragmatics, especially politeness strategies, has been widely carried out because of the importance of this strategy in communicating, but in this study have some differences to them. Dwi Handayani(2022) explore that (Silitonga 2022) state that with titled " An Analysis of The Politeness Strategy used in Mata Najwa Talk Show on Trans7". Based on their study, the researcher would like to fill the gap on this research in the sub-strategy section because previous research focused on the four main types of politeness strategies, besides that the previous researcher's data source was in the form of a talk show, where the speaker was from two directions, where a speaker and speech partner must have different politeness strategies, especially with important or famous people, because their speech is in the spotlight of the public, therefore, although much research has been conducted on this, the results of each study are different. The purpose of conducting previous research studies is as reference material for researchers in this field of study so that the author can enrich his theories. The following is a reference to previous research regarding "Politeness Strategies": The focus of the research is the types and dominant type seen from Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies using qualitative research methods. The strength of this study is that it provides a thorough explanation of various politeness strategies based on realization and how they are used by speakers. So, what differentiates this research from research that will be conducted by other researchers is the type of data that will be used, as well as how researchers. The main purpose in doing this study is to describe and explain the politeness strategies that are used by the participants in talk show interaction. From the analysis, the researcher found out the result that Positive politeness (76,32%), Negative Politeness (18,42%) and off Record Strategy (5,27%) and there is no Bald Record Strategy used in this analysis.

## Method

In analyzing some data, there are several methods that researchers should pay attention to so that they get an accurate analysis. This research uses Descriptive Qualitative because this research is about how to speak politely and the method of approach taken, with data in the form of verbal conversation transcripts and understanding the context. Descriptive Qualitative Research aims to understand human

action and what drives that behavior (Lincoln, 2005). Meanwhile, according to Creswell 2014 (Novita, Beru, and Pasaribu, 2022: 3928), descriptive qualitative research explores and understands perceived social meanings or humanitarian issues.

In this research, researcher used data collection instruments through observation. The main tool used in data collection observations is the "Politeness Strategies Table", to search for complete additional information using electronic media such as laptops,, notes, stationery, and the YouTube application to search for President Barack Obama's speech. Researcher in this study collected data by looking for speech transcripts from YouTube. The data collection technique used by researcher is to search for speech videos, watch and listen to the videos repeatedly, download the videos, read the video transcripts, and compare them to ensure the validity of the data based on several videos of Barack Obama's speeches.

The data from this research are Barack Obama's speeches in several of his videos which contain politeness strategies. Data will be taken from Barack Obama's speech utterances from Politeness strategies. These policy strategies were taken when Barack Obama made his speech as president. The policy strategies presented can be carried out using various strategies. Transcripts of President Barack Obama's speeches from YouTube are the data source for this research. YouTube transcripts are necessary documents for qualitative descriptive research. Researcher analyzed the Politeness Strategy in this research. The data used by researcher are transcripts of speeches delivered consisting of four main categories of politeness techniques, grounded in the theories of Brown and Levinson. President Barack Obama's speech transcript taken from the internet via various links is included as a secondary data source: President Obama's Election Night Victory Speech –Nov 6, 2012 In Chicago, and Indonesia's Example to the World – Nov 10, 2010, at the University of Indonesia.

Researcher in this study collected data by looking for speech transcripts from YouTube. The data collection technique used by researcher is to search for speech videos, watch and listen to the videos repeatedly, download the videos, read the video transcripts, and compare them to ensure the validity of the data based on several videos of Barack Obama's speeches. After that, the next step is to analyze the data that has been collected. Researcher analyze the data by identifying each Politeness Strategy in President Barack Obama's speech, then grouping them according to the kind of Politeness strategy and entering them into the analysis table. The theory of Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) was used to analyze data through qualitative analysis. The data for this research comes from YouTube video transcripts. Researcher was analyzing the data based on Miles' theory to analyze Qualitative data, namely:

- 1) Classify data into four categories of politeness strategies based on theory Brown and Levinson (1987)
- 2) Describes each types of strategy into context
- 3) Calculate the percentage of data in this study the researcher used the formula for calculating the percentage of data to answer the problem of the dominant type.  $N = F/n \times 100 \%$

## Results

After analyzing the politeness strategies found in the Barack Obama's speech, the researcher found that there are four politeness strategies found in the Barack Obama speech. They were: Bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Bald on record, this strategy ranks as the most direct strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987), based on the findings the researcher found that there were 12 data, was realized into 2 sub-strategies. Positive politeness, the researcher found that there were 73 data, was realized into 11 sub-strategies. Negative Politeness the researcher found that there were 12 data, was realized into 5 sub-strategies. Off record the researcher found that there were 27 data, was realized into 7 sub-strategies. Bald on record is 12 data (10%), Positive politeness is 73 data (59%), Negative politeness is 12 data (10%), and off record is 27 data (21%).

Table 1 Classify Data into Politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson)

No	Utterances	Politeness strategy	Percentage
1.	Bald on Record		10%
	1. I believe we can build on the progress <i>we've made and continue</i> to fight for new security for the middle class.	Allow something	
2.	Positive Politeness		59%
	1. <i>I am hopeful</i> tonight because I've seen the spirit at work in America I've seen It in the family.	Detect the listener's (Interests, wants, needs, and goods)	
3.	Negative Politeness		10%
	1. Indonesia is <i>without imperfections. No country is but here</i> we can find the ability	Be conventionally indirect	
4.	Off record strategies		21%
	1. we can <i>never forget</i> that as we speak people in distant nations	Providing Relevant Cue Instructions	

The data it was found that the most used politeness strategies found in the Barack Obama speech with research result 124 data was positive politeness is 73 data (59%), that the was realization Be optimistic that 20 data (16%). Positive politeness is used by Obama in the speech to avoid hurting the listener's feelings, understanding what your listener needs, kindness, or praise. Obama's speech created a pleasant situation, built good relationship, recognized, accepted, and desired.

## Discussion

The results of this study are supported by findings from other researchers who have the same type of politeness strategy, namely Bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. The results of the dominant type are also found in the same researchers who support this research to have common results and goals, namely positive politeness. Similar research has been conducted by several researchers the first similar research was conducted by Dwi Handayani Silitonga (Silitonga, 2022) who examined positive politeness in the Mata Najwa talk show on Trans 7. This study found that positive politeness in Mata Najwa talk show on Trans 7 is positive politeness. The second supporting research was conducted by Lastri Wahyuni Manurung (Manurung et al. 2021) who examined positive politeness in the Batak Language in

Marhata Sinamot (Bargaining for Dowry). The third similar research was by Christina Natalina Saragi (Christina 2022) explore that positive politeness Strategi Kesantunan kegiatan Marunjuk (Upacara Puncak Pernikahan). The forth similar research was by Aisyah Bella Raesky (Raesky and Novitri 2023) explore that positive politeness in George W. Bush's Victory Speeches. The fifth is Roita Angel Isabella (Roita 2022) explore that positive politeness in An Analysis of Politeness Strategy of Bataknese Traditional Wedding Ceremony. The sixth is Ezra Octania Sianipar (Octania 2023), explore that positive politeness in Politeness Strategies Used by The Main Character in the KKN Di Desa Penari Movie". The seventh is Yani Kurnia Sari (Yani 2020) explore that positive politeness in Politeness Strategy in Barack Obama's Victory Speech".

However, there are other findings that differ from this study. Research from Ni Putu Diana Agustini Putri (Agustini Putri 2023) only get 3 types of politeness strategies in the First Trump-Clinton Presidential Debate, then other different researchers from Ziaul Fitri (Fitri 2022) in Politeness Strategies In Mulan Movie, also different dominant type is Negative politeness from Supriyanta, Imam Ghozal (Supriyanto 2017), in Claire Peterson In The Boy Next Door Movie. Research from Sarina Kiki Sianturi (SIANTURI, Dirgeyasa, and Lubis 2021) In Ulos Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony dominant type is Bald on record.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, the data conclusions are drawn. There are four types of politeness strategy according to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are Bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record in Obama's speech. The percentage of this research found 124 utterances used in Obama's speech, namely: Bald on record is 12 data (10%), Positive politeness is 73 data (59%), Negative politeness is 12 data (10%), and off record is 27 data (21%). So, the most dominant type is positive politeness that was the realization be optimistic that 20 data (16%). In this study there are still many shortcomings, because this study only focuses on the part of speech which is then realized against politeness strategy.

Suggestions are stated as the following:

- 1 It is important to conduct research related to politeness strategies, not only the types of bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record, and can increase our understanding of politeness strategies.
- 2 For the English Department students, it will be useful and help them to use this research as a reference in studying politeness strategy further.
- 3 For the lectures taught in this research will be useful to be learned to be a reference for the teaching students.
- 4 For the other researchers to continue further research on politeness strategy, especially about the types of politeness strategy that are useful for reducing misinterpretation in communication.

## Acknowledgment

The researcher realizes that without the help of various parties, the article could not be completed. Therefore the researcher would like to thank and convey the deepest gratitude to Dr. Christina Saragi, S.Pd., M.Hum and Dr. Kammer Sipayung, S.Pd., M.Pd as the consultant and thanks for their generous assistance, generous time, advice, moral support, precious time their spent on supervising the draft of this thesis, and which have given comments, suggestion, and corrected.

## References

- Agustini Putri, Putu Diana. 2023. "Politeness Strategies Used in the First Trump-Clinton Presidential Debate." *International Journal of Language and Literature* 6(1):35–43. doi: 10.23887/ijll.v6i1.46491.
- Anggrarini, Natalia, and Ikhbal Faturakhman. 2021. "Students' Perception on the Use of Youtube in English Language Learning During Pandemic in Wiralodra University." *JELLT (Journal of English Language and Language Teaching)* 5(1):86–99. doi: 10.36597/jellt.v5i1.10029.
- Ashar, Ashar, Meisar Ashari, and Fitri Maharani Hamsah. 2023. "The Impact of Using Youtube Social Media on Students' Positive Behavior in Indonesian Language Class V At Sd Inpres Bontomanai." *Klasikal : Journal of Education, Language Teaching and Science* 5(1):101–8. doi: 10.52208/klasikal.v5i1.627.
- Asya, Shafira, Naza Fanisa, Cindy Clarissa, and Rahmadsyah Rangkuti. 2023. "Gender Language Differences Founded in RANS Entertainment Podcast." *Jurnal Suluh Pendidikan* 11(2):115–27. doi: 10.36655/jsp.v11i2.1164.
- Bar-Or, Ella, Tom Regev, Paz Shaviv, and Noam Tractinsky. 2022. "Towards a Sociolinguistics-Based Framework for the Study of Politeness in Human-Computer Interaction." *Human-Computer Interaction*.
- Dewanti, Meilina Putri. 2022. "Politeness Strategies of the Main Characters in the Fault in Our Stars Novel." *UC Journal: ELT, Linguistics and Literature Journal* 3(1):72–89. doi: 10.24071/uc.v3i1.4804.
- Education, English. 2021. "An Analysis of Figurative Language in Michael Jackson Song Lyric Dewi Sri Lumbantobing, 2 Bloner Sinurat and 3 Herman \* English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas HKB Nommensen Corresponding Author." 4(2):123–34.
- Fitri, Ziaul. 2022. "A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies in Mulan Movie." *English Education Journal* 13(2):185–201. doi: 10.24815/eej.v13i2.21980.
- Manurung, Lastri Wahyuni, Sumarlam Sumarlam, Dwi Purnanto, and Sri Marmanto. 2020. "Batakese' Politeness Strategy in Marhata Sinamot (Dowry Bargaining)." 338(Prasasti):357–62. doi: 10.2991/prasasti-19.2019.61.
- Nashruddin, Nashruddin, and Liqaa Habeb Al-Obaydi. 2021. "Linguistics Politeness in Reinforcing Character During Learning Activities Corresponding Email Article's History Linguistics Politeness in Reinforcing Character during Learning Activities." *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature* 8(1):210–217.
- Novita, Desi, Dewi Beru, and Riris Romauli Pasaribu. 2022. "Students' Difficulties and Errors in Translating Argumentation Text from Indonesian to English at the Third Semester Students of Nommensen HKBP University." 6:3926–31.
- Oviogun, Peter V., and Pal S. Veerdee. 2020. "Definition of Language and Linguistics: Basic Competence." *Macrolinguistics and Microlinguistics* 1(1):1–12. doi: 10.21744/mami.v1n1.1.
- Pinker, Steven, and Ray Jackendoff. 2005. "The Faculty of Language: What's Special about It?" *Cognition* 95(2):201–36. doi: 10.1016/j.cognition.2004.08.004.
- Raesky, Aisya Bella, and Novitri Novitri. 2023. "An Analysis of Politeness Strategies in George W. Bush's Victory Speeches." *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature* 11(2):1191–1201. doi: 10.24256/ideas.v11i2.3833.
- Sadewa, I. Made Yoga Ary. 2022. "The Guest Satisfaction Acceleration Strategy Based on Importance Performance Analysis of Solaris Hotel Kuta, Bali, Indonesia."

- International Journal of Current Science Research and Review* 05(01). doi: 10.47191/ijcsrr/v5-i1-15.
- Sapitri, Putri Adrian, Aprilia Chasanah, Avivah Adinda Putri, and Jessica Paulima. 2019. "Journal of Research and Innovation in Language Exploring Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies: An Explanation on the Nature of the Politeness Phenomenon ARTICLE HISTORY." 1(3):111-17.
- Sembiring, Elita Modesta, Faido Marudut Pardamean Simanjuntak, Karana Jaya Tarigan, and Veracy Silalahi. 2023. "Politeness in the EFL Classroom Interaction: Strategies in Avoiding Face Threatening Act (FTA)." *Journal of Classroom Action Research* 1(2):18-26. doi: 10.52622/jcar.v1i2.73.
- SIANTURI, SARINA KIKI, I. Wy Dirgeyasa, and Fauziah Khairani Lubis. 2021. "Politeness Strategies in Delivering Ulos in Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony." *Linguistica* 10(3):551. doi: 10.24114/jalu.v10i3.33265.
- Silitonga, Dwi Handayani. 2022. "An Analysis of The Politeness Strategy Used in Mata Najwa Talk Show on Trans7." *JETAL: Journal of English Teaching & Applied Linguistic* 3(2):17-24. doi: 10.36655/jetal.v3i2.659.
- Sipayung, Kammer Tuahman, Sahlan Tampubolon, Fenty Debora Napitupulu, and Febrina Lumban Tobing. 2021. "Generic Structure of Descriptive Text Written English Language Learner and Teachers." *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5(S3):1636-50. doi: 10.21744/lingcure.v5ns3.1950.
- Sugianto, Riris. 2021. "Pragmatic Comparison on Javanese and Western Politeness in Cross-Cultural Communication." *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Dakwah* 3(1):34-45.
- Suprpto, Suprpto, Syukri Hamzah, Didi Yulistio, and Susetyo Susetyo. 2021. "The Relationship Organizational Culture, Motivation, Resilience and Leadership of Principals with the Work Ethic of Indonesian Language Teachers." *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan* 6(1):192-210. doi: 10.25217/ji.v6i1.1293.