

**ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES  
USED IN OPRAH WINFREY'S TALK SHOW  
WITH RICKY MARTIN AS GUEST STAR**

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***ABSTRAK***

*Oprah Winfrey adalah pemilik media Amerika, talk show host, aktris, produser, dan dermawan. Winfrey terkenal karena penghargaan yang didapatkannya, multi-pemenang penghargaan bicara, yang telah menjadi program rating tertinggi dari jenisnya dalam sejarah dan dia juga wanita paling berpengaruh di dunia menurut beberapa penilaian. Dalam studi ini, satu script dari talk show Oprah Winfrey dengan bintang tamu yang berbeda digunakan. Bintang tamunya adalah Ricky Martin yang dikenal sebagai penyanyi pop. Data diklasifikasikan ke dalam jenis strategi kesantunan yang diusulkan oleh Brown dan Levinson (1978). Strategi ditemukan dalam skrip talk show yaitu Bald on record, Positive politeness, Negative politeness, dan Off record. Tapi tidak semua jenis setiap strategi yang diterapkan dalam naskah talk show Oprah Winfrey tersebut.*

*Kata Kunci: Strategi Kesantunan, Oprah Winfrey, Talk Show*

**1. Background of the Study**

According to Brown and Levinson (1993:1) politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers "face". Face refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself maintaining that "self-esteem" in public or in private situations. Usually person tries to avoid embarrassing to other person, or make them feel uncomfortable. Face Threatening Acts (FTA's) are acts that infringe on the hearers need to maintain his self-esteem, and be respected. Politeness strategies are developed for the main purpose of dealing with these FTA's. There are four types of politeness strategies, described by Brown and Levinson that sum up human "politeness" behavior. The strategies are bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record-indirect strategies. It is chosen to analyze considering that when the

speaker doing the FTA's, it will reflect to the speaker's feeling and influencing the speaker's responds.

Related in this study, talk show of Oprah Winfrey shows the application of politeness strategy used for ask question and respond question directly between Oprah and her guest star. Writer considers it is important to analyze the factor influencing of politeness strategy used in Oprah Winfrey's talk show. As we know Oprah Winfrey is an American media proprietor, talk show host, actress, producer, and philanthropist. Winfrey is best known for her self-titled, multi-award-winning talk show, which has become the highest-rated program of its kind in history and she is also the most influential woman in the world according to some assessments. In this study, one script from Oprah Winfrey's talk show with a guest stars were used. A script is when the guest star was Ricky Martin who known as pop singer. So that, Oprah Winfrey's talk show becomes the proper subject to analyze in the context study of politeness.

## **2. Problems of the Study**

In analyzing the talk show script there are some problems that were formulated to the used of politeness strategy applied in Oprah Winfrey's talk show:

- a. What types of politeness strategies are used in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script with Ricky Martin as the guest star?
- b. What is the factor that might influence the choice of strategies in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script with Ricky Martin as the guest star?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

Having looked at the problems above, the aims of this study were focused on:

- a. To analyze the types of politeness strategies used in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script with Ricky Martin as the guest star.
- b. To analyze the factor that might influence the choice of strategies in Oprah Winfrey's talk show scripts with Ricky Martin and J.K Rowling as the guest stars.

## **4. Research Method**

In doing a scientific writing, it is necessary to follow scientific procedures for the success in conducting a research. The procedure known as research method is

very important for the validity of research. It can be defined as the procedure or the method used in writing a scientific paper, which in this case includes the method of determination of the source of data, the process of collecting data, and how the data will be analyzed, they are as follows:

#### **4.1 Data Source**

This Oprah Winfrey's talk show was chosen as the data source because Oprah Winfrey as we know is one of the greatest talk show host and the most influential woman in the world. The Oprah Winfrey talk show script contains many of conversation, in situation ask question and respond question directly and spontaneously between Oprah and her guest star in her talk show.

#### **4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data**

All the data was taken from the Oprah Winfrey talk show script with one guest stars. The script was taken from a sources; *rmfoundation.arpls.net/01.24.05.media2.html*. The first technique was done by watching the Oprah Winfrey's talk shows and then read the scripts of the Oprah Winfrey's talk show. After that the process of collecting data also was done by re-watching the talk show and did the technique of collecting data while re-reading the Oprah Winfrey's talk show script.

Then after the all data was collected, the data was divided into the sub-theories of politeness strategy. After that the writer divided them into the factors that influence the choice of politeness strategy. This is a library research so there were no respondents and informants involved in this study.

#### **4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data**

The data that has been collected was classified according on the theory from Brown and Levinson (1987) to find the types of politeness strategies used in the conversation of the talk show script. There four types of politeness strategy, they are; bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record politeness strategy. Then this study also used theory from Brown and Levinson about the factors influencing the choice of strategies by characters in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script with Ricky Martin as the guest star.

## **5. Analysis Oprah Winfrey's talk show scripts**

### **5.1 The Used of Politeness Strategy in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script with Ricky Martin**

In using bald on record type 1 in Oprah Winfrey's talk show with Ricky Martin, there are cases of Non-minimization of face treat found:

#### **a. Strategy 2 – Metaphorical Urgency for Emphasis**

Example: *Take a look* (1)

Description: When speaker (S) speaks as if maximum efficiency is very important, she provides metaphorical urgency for emphasis.

#### **b. Strategy 3 – Metaphorical Urgency for High Valuation of Hearer's Friendship**

Example: *Good to see you* (2)

Description: This type perhaps explains why orders and entreaties (or begging), which have inverted assumptions about the relative status of Oprah and Ricky Martin.

#### **c. Strategy 5 – Task Oriented/Paradigmatic Form of Instruction**

Example: *Have a seat* (3)

Description: Which is the S's wants to satisfy the H's face by asked the hearer to sit down.

#### **d. Strategy 7 – Sympathetic Advice or Warnings**

Example: *We have to stop this* (4)

Description: In doing the FTA, in this case he conveys that he does care about child trafficking therefore he cares about H's positive face, no redress is required. Sympathetic advice is baldly on record. This type of bald on record occurs where doing the FTA is primarily in H's interest.

In using bald on record type 2 in Oprah Winfrey's talk show with Ricky Martin, there are cases of FTA-oriented bald on record usage found:

#### **a. Strategy 1 – Welcoming**

Example: *Please welcome Ricky Martin!* (5)

Description: This strategy is used by Oprah as the speaker to welcome Ricky Martin as the guest star.

In using positive politeness strategy which was applied there are:

- a. Strategy 1 - Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods)

Example: *You look great* (6)

Description: This output suggest that he should take notice of aspects of Oprah's condition (anything which looks as though Oprah would want his to notice and approve it) other aspects of this sentence is that he should 'notice' and indicate that host from the talk show not embarrassed by it.

- b. Strategy 2 - Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)

Example: *Ricky Martin skyrocketed to megastar status with his number-one hit "Livin' La Vida Loca.* (7)

Description: The S (Oprah) shows her interest to her guest star figure, Ricky Martin by saying the sentence (7).

- c. Strategy 3 – Intensify interest to H

Example: *Ricky says that he felt helpless sitting at home on his couch watching the news coverage of the tsunami. So he decided to do something, and last week, Ricky traveled to Thailand and my producers went with him to Thailand.* (8)

Description: Oprah as the speaker communicated to audience that she shared some of Ricky Martin's experience to intensify the interest of audience to know how feeling touched Ricky Martin when saw the orphans.

- d. Strategy 5 – Seek agreement

Example: *that is so disturbing that we're hearing about. Young tsunami victims, that you have the pornographers...* (9)

*Yeah.* (10)

Description: Strategy 5 (seek agreement) is applied in their conversation in example it starts when Oprah is saying "that is so disturbing that we're hearing about. Young tsunami victims, that you have the pornographers...(9)" and Ricky Martin is answering "Yeah" (10).

e. Strategy 6 – Avoid Disagreement – Hedging Opinion

Example: *They call him Little Wave, but he's a big local hero* (11)

Description: The use of this strategy is to assume some degree of common ground between S and H, in that S calls upon H to use her common knowledge to interpret S's attitude.

f. Strategy 7 - Presuppose/raise/assert common ground

Example: *Yeah, and real powerful* (12)

Description: This is where unidentified woman#2 as speaker speaks as if hearer (H) in this case is Ricky Martin were speaker (S). Unidentified woman#2 feels the same as what Ricky Martin says about the powerful woman who saved her life by holding herself on that window.

g. Strategy 10 – Offer, promise

Example: *Ricky Martin will tell us about this miracle.* (13)

Description: The usage of this strategy is for help to obtain in order to redress the potential treat of some FTA's.

h. Strategy 11 – Be optimistic

Example: *So you said, 'I'm going to go back to the children...'* (14)

Description: Oprah as the speaker wants to convince back up his opinion about Ricky Martin that he is going to go back to the children by using strategy 10.

i. Strategy 12 - Include both S and H in the activity

Example: *...let's take that in for a moment because we hear the numbers...* (15)

Description: When she uses 'Let's' it is including both of them to the conversation that is trying to find Oprah's want and she is making an effort to figure it out. She is trying to soften requests to her audience.

j. Strategy 13 - Give (or ask for) reasons

Example: *Why did you walk away at the top?* (16)

Description: By involving her to his reason, she is thereby led to see the reasonableness of his FTA. In other words, assuming cooperation, away of showing what reason is needed.

In using negative politeness strategy which was applied there are:

a. Strategy 1 - Be conventionally indirect

Example: *I needed to step out of the picture for a little while.* (17)

Description: In this sentence there are two tensions that a speaker faced in this strategy are the desire to give H an “out” by being indirect and the desire to go on record. Ricky Martin as S wants to communicate his desire to be indirect even though in fact the utterance goes on record.

b. Strategy 2 – Question, hedge

Example: *Is it comfortable for you to tell us your story? Is it OK?* (18)

Description: Avoiding coercion of H may take the form of attempting to minimize the treat of coercion by clarifying S’s view of the power, social distance, and ranking values.

c. Strategy 3 – Be pessimistic

Example: *how did an infant only one month old survive the tsunami?* (19)

Description: Gave redress to the H’s negative face by expressing doubt of an infant only one month’s condition. She just being amazing and there’s nothing that she can speak, not a word about that infant.

d. Strategy 6 – Apologize

Example: *I'm sorry, but I need to be this raw...* (20)

Description: This strategy is used where Ricky Martin as speaker can simply admit that he is impinging on H’s face. S can indicate his reluctance to impinge on H’s negative face and hereby partially redress that impingement by apologizing.

In using off record strategy which was applied there are:

a. Strategy 1 – Give hints

Example: *We need people that can help us take care of our children. We need people that can help us build new homes.* (21)

Description: This means the orphans need volunteers who are ready to help and care for them well and sincerely. The volunteers, who will take the time to charity,

donate some money to help their daily lives and give their passion, dreams, and a new hope for re-live the tragedy they have faced.

b. Strategy 2 - Give association clues

Example: *"What would have happened to these girls if institutions like this didn't exist?" And that's when I found out about child trafficking (22)*

Description: Ricky Martin wants everyone to open their eyes and heart to help each other or build similar institutions to help those who are victims of child trafficking.

c. Strategy 4 – Understatements

Example: *Are you able to describe now what it was like in that morgue? (23)*

*Not yet, Oprah. It was really intense. (24)*

Description: Oprah Winfrey want to know how the conditions and the situation there. Then Ricky Martin answered in sentence 24 *"Not yet, Oprah. It was really intense"*. From the answers we can conclude a point on scalar predicates that happens there is an emergency

d. Strategy 9 – Use Metaphor

Example: *girls that lived under a plastic bag. (25)*

Description: The use of metaphor is perhaps usually on record, but there is a possibility that exactly which of the connotation of metaphor S intends may be off record. It have meaning that *"girls that lived under a plastic bag"* means that a little girl who became homeless living on the streets of other people and seek mercy from the leftovers of food on the street.

e. Strategy 10 – Use rhetorical questions

Example: *So when did you decide that your passion was helping to save the world's children? (26)*

Description: Where this strategy is used for asking question with no intention of obtaining an answer is to break sincerity condition on question namely, that Oprah as speaker wants Ricky as hearer to provide her with the indicated information which said by Oprah in sentence 30. When Oprah Winfrey gave the question, Ricky Martin did not answer Oprah's questions in advance, but he explained



everything else first. It indicates that the question that is asked by Oprah Winfrey had no intention of obtaining an answer.

## **5.2 The Factors That Influence the Choice of Strategies in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script**

The factors that influence the choice of strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson also applied in Oprah Winfrey's talk show script in delivering the topic of talk show. In used the Intrinsic Payoffs: a priori consideration in Oprah Winfrey's talk show with Ricky Martin such as: "*Good to see you*" (have the opportunity to pay back in face whatever he potentially takes away by the FTA), "*Yeah, and real powerful*" (can minimize the face threatening aspect of an act by assuring the addressee that S considers himself to be 'of the same kind'), "*I needed to step out of the picture for a little while*" (can respect and honor in return for FTA receivers), and "*They call him Little Wave*" (to get credit for being wise, not pushy, and he could be responsible for the interpretation of potentially damaging the face).

The factors that influence the choice of strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson in used the circumstances: sociological variables in Oprah Winfrey's talk show with Ricky Martin is showed in dialogue "*Is it comfortable for you to tell us your story? Is it OK?*"(to ask politely to keep the distance between speaker and hearer).

## **6. Conclusion**

**Based on the analysis and discussion**, it can be concluded that politeness strategies and the factors that influence the choice of strategies have a correlation whether when speak to female or male person or have a close relation or not they always try to be polite in all situations. It can be occurred in all kinds of social distances, for example based on this study, it found in friendship, job as presenter in talk show, and for the first meeting. They all applied politeness strategies depend on the situations and the needs of communication. When applied the politeness strategies they should be carefully to choose the strategies, moreover conversation in a small of group like in talk show.

In Oprah Winfrey's talk show with Ricky Martin the politeness strategy mainly applied is the use of positive politeness strategy, it also has the correlation with the factors that influence the choice of strategies. Positive politeness believes to build some familiar situation between speaker and hearer and sometimes they used joking to break the formal conversation in term of a small distance between speaker and hearer.

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