


POLITENESS STRATEGIES ON STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO TEACHER'S ONLINE ANNOUNCEMENTS



 **Genevieve S. Selgas**

Bukidnon State University, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, Philippines.

Email: genevieveselgas@buku.edu.ph Tel: +639675243727



ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 22 March 2022

Revised: 4 May 2022

Accepted: 24 May 2022

Published: 7 June 2022

Keywords

Politeness strategies
Students' responses
Online announcement
Google classroom
Online learning
COVID-19
Mixed-method research design.

The shift of the usual operations in education from face-to-face to distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic has made the Google classroom one of the online learning modalities. The study aims to identify the politeness strategies employed in students' responses to the Bukidnon State University teachers' Google classroom announcement within three semesters. It also explores the significant difference between genders in employing politeness strategies. The study applied a mixed-method research design. The findings show that the students employ four politeness strategies of **Brown and Levinson (1987)**: Positive, Negative, Bald-On-Record, and Off-Record Strategies. In addition, the male students frequently use negative politeness strategies, which contradicts **Lakoff (1975)** claims that women's language consists of hedges, apologies, and indirect requests, a negative politeness strategy. Thus, determining significant differences in politeness strategies among students needs other factors such as cultural differences, gender language, gender performativity, and teachers' announcement to which the students respond.

Contribution/Originality: Teachers have observed that technology-mediated communication decreases teacher-student interaction and diminishes students' politeness. This pragmatics research, conducted at Bukidnon State University, is the university's pioneering politeness study, exploring students' politeness strategies in e-communication. In addition, the results provide data that could help teachers manage their e-classrooms for efficient learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Politeness is a courteous social practice or etiquette within a society. It entails the speaker's intention not to offend the listener during the interaction. According to **Lakoff (1990)** politeness is a system of interpersonal relations aimed to ease engagement by reducing the conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interactions. In other words, politeness is a conflict-averting strategy. Its primary function is to preserve the social status quo while avoiding devaluing others.

According to **Zander (2013)** politeness strategies vary from language to language and from culture to culture. It means what society considers polite may not be polite to other groups of people of different races, cultures, and gender since what they do or act when they communicate is determined by their social groups. Various factors will significantly impact social interaction, like social distance and closeness, gender, age, power, social values, and the degree of politeness imposed on interaction. In fact, the study of **Lakoff (1975)** claims that the language of men is different from the language of women. He further argued that women identify themselves as politer than men as supported by **Tannen (1990)** that men grow up in a world in which conversation is competitive and therefore strive

to ensure that others don't dominate them. Women, however, use conversation to gain support and confirmation rather than status. Thus, politeness strategies may be vital in human interactions, whether in business, tourism, governance, or education.

Recently, almost every facet of human life has been affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the usual operations in education. This pandemic brought global public health hazards, which resulted in limited human face-to-face interaction, as maintaining distance has been one effort to prevent the transmission of the virus since early February 2020. For this reason, online communication has become the required mode of communication. Consequently, the curriculum of educational institutions from every corner is revised to suit remote, distance, online, and digital forms of delivery (Murphy, 2020). During this challenging time, the concern is not just about whether online teaching-learning methods can provide quality education but also about how academic institutions will be able to adopt online learning in such a massive manner.

Aside from the issue of quality education in online teaching-learning, one of the increasing issues among teachers and students is students' politeness in their response to teachers' online announcements (Dhawan, 2020). Students are poorly prepared for digital communication because of the sudden shift to online learning. Until now, students want two-way interaction, which sometimes gets challenging to implement due to technical limitations, especially the internet connectivity of the students and teachers. As a result, students find responding to teachers' online announcements tedious and unengaging (Li and Dewaele (2020) as cited in Sembiring, Sianturi, Simanjuntak, and Tarigan (2021b)).

Given the current skepticism regarding the efficacy of online learning discourse and its effect on students, the study focuses on students' politeness strategies in responding to teachers' online announcements in Google Classroom. Google Classroom has been widely used as an online communication medium in the educational context in the Philippines. It promotes accessibility, utility, and user friendly. Furthermore, it could help with communication, interaction, and instruction delivery in flexible learning environments (Zuñiga-Tonio, 2021). On the other hand, one study claims that no online platform can substitute face-to-face interaction between students and teachers. Regardless of the claim, practical and interactive online learning may be improved since the current situation necessitates online learning. According to Sembiring et al. (2021b), employing politeness strategies can establish an interactive classroom in online learning. In other words, knowledge of politeness strategies is essential in every classroom, whether face-to-face or online. Therefore, politeness strategies used by the students and teachers in the class may play a significant role in the learning and teaching process.

This study is anchored on Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of politeness strategies. This paradigm uses Goffman (1959) concept of "face" to suggest that each individual has two types of faces: positive (esteemed self-image) and negative (desire for autonomy); any action that threatens either a positive or negative face is referred to as a "face-threatening act" (FTA). Speakers use positive and negative politeness strategies to keep their faces during interactions. Brown and Levinson (1987) identify politeness strategies such as positive, negative, bald-on-record, and off-record.

Positive politeness strategy emphasizes the speaker's and the hearer's sense of intimacy and belonging. By catering to the listener's interest and expressing sympathy in a friendly manner, the speaker hopes to boost the hearer's positive face. In other words, when the speaker expresses desires that are equally desirable to others, such as good health, self-esteem, dignity, and honor, a positive face emerges; nevertheless, it is undermined when the individual is criticized or insulted. According to Roberts (1992), as cited by Correo (2014), disapproval or rejection, complaint, disagreement, contradiction, unleashed negative emotions, irreverence, bad news, noncooperation, interruption, and inattention are threats to a positive face.

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson presented fifteen ways to identify politeness strategies, including noticing the hearer's wants, exaggerating the speaker's interest or approval, intensifying the speaker's interest in the hearer, using group identity markers, seeking the hearer's agreement, avoiding conflict with the hearer, assuming or

asserting common ground, making a joke, assuming or asserting knowledge of the hearer's wants, offering or promising, being optimistic, including the speaker and hearer in the activities, and giving gifts such as goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation to the hearer.

In addition, the negative politeness strategy, according to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), is a regressive action directed at the hearer's negative face. The speaker strives to be indirect so there can be no misinterpretations. In other words, the negative politeness strategy addresses the speaker to interact with the hearer in a non-imposing way through hedging, being indirect, or apologizing. It highlights the hearer's right to freedom of action, which can be a defensive technique. Moreover, [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) theory assumes that most speech actions, such as requests, offers, disputes, and compliments, intrinsically threaten either the hearer's or the speaker's face wants and that politeness is involved in resolving such face-threatening acts (FTA). Thus, through the use of different ways and mitigating devices such as: being conventionally indirect; questioning and hedging; being pessimistic; minimizing the size of an imposition; giving deference; apologizing; impersonalizing speaker and hearer; stating the face-threatening act (FTAs) as a basic rule; nominalize, and go on record as incurring debt or as not an indebted hearer, speakers can use these strategies to select the appropriate way of preventing threatening acts to the hearer's face, or at the very least minimize or soften it, ([Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), as cited in [Muhasibi and Sujito \(2021\)](#)).

On the other hand, according to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), in the bald-on-record strategy, the speaker transmits the message in the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way possible ([Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), as cited in [Bousfield \(2008\)](#)). This strategy makes no attempt to acknowledge the hearer's face wants. Bald-on-record means 'baldly' entails phrasing the message in direct and honest terms with no attempt to soften the FTA. In addition, it does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's face. As a result, the statements must be delivered directly, vividly, and explicitly. In applying this strategy, the speaker may utilize its five strategies: showing disagreement, giving suggestions/advice, requesting, warning, and threatening in the imperative form.

Moreover, one form of bald-on-record strategy is a direct imperative or direct command ([Brown & Levinson, 1987](#)). They further explain two cases when the speaker uses this strategy. The first case is the non-minimization of the face threat through four conditions. First, when the speaker is in an urgent situation. Second, when the speaker has more power than the listener, third is when the speaker desires to show sympathy; and last, when the speaker does not want to maintain the face. In addition, they state that the second case occurs when this strategy is oriented to face. It occurs in three situations: welcoming or inviting, farewells, and offers. For example, in the response of the student to the online post, "*I will send my output to your messenger.*" The student is using bald-on-record since he directly states his message without asking permission from the teacher. In this instance, the student exerts no effort to minimize the threats by asking may I. this is due to the fact that bald on record strategies are primarily used by the speakers who closely know their hearers, such as close friends or family. In this circumstance, the student undoubtedly feels that aside from being a student, he is also a friend to the teacher.

Furthermore, the last strategy is called off-record. [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), as cited by [Sadeghoghli and Niroomand \(2016\)](#), posit that the least threatening linguistic strategy is performing the FTA off-record. The off-record strategy takes some of the pressure off of the speaker. Its utterances indirectly use language whose precise meaning has to be interpreted. The FTA performs off-record, typically by deploying an indirect illocutionary act that has more than one interpretation. Thus, it allows for plausible deniability on the speaker if the intended recipient takes offense at the face threat inherent in the utterance ([Bousfield, 2008](#)). It allows the speaker to do FTA indirectly. As a result, the speaker's utterance has more than one plausible interpretation.

For example, the student responded to the online post, "*I wonder if we can submit our output on Wednesday.*" In this statement, the teacher can draw a few interpretations, such as the student is asking for an extension of the submission of the output, asking for a confirmation that the given deadline is final and irrevocable, or analyzing the teacher's attitude based on the response to the student's message.

It is a challenge for everybody to utilize politeness strategies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's negative repercussions, such as mental, behavioral, and psychological, might influence how people interact with one another. In its effect, employing politeness or practical application of good manners in online interaction may be diminished or lessened since politeness is a conscious effort of every individual. For this reason, many researchers have studied the employment of politeness strategies in the utilization of these different online platforms. Over the years, several scholars have studied politeness strategies employed in online classroom interaction. These studies focus on the student's and teacher's utilization of different politeness strategies in online interaction. Among these are researches done by [Mulyono, Amalia, and Suryoputro \(2019\)](#); [Sembiring, Girsang, and Sianturi \(2021a\)](#); [Sembiring et al. \(2021b\)](#); [Sembiring, Girsang, and Sianturi \(2021\)](#).

These studies have proven the use of politeness strategies. The researchers concluded that these politeness strategies were employed to ensure the efficacy of online learning interaction by increasing students' language competency. The researcher believes that no study at Bukidnon State University attempts to determine the politeness strategies employed in google classroom interaction, particularly on the students' responses to teacher's online announcements. Aside from that, there is still very little research that looks into politeness and other speech actions in online learning. Thus, this study sought to address the politeness gap in the present pandemic's online learning.

This study attempted to answer the following:

1. What politeness strategies do students employ in their responses to teachers' online announcements?
2. Is there a significant difference between females and males in employing politeness strategies in their responses to teachers' online announcements?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the mixed-method research design, specifically discourse analysis. The respondents of the study were the students of Bukidnon State University enrolled in one of the following subjects: Advance Grammar, Language and Power, Language of Non-Literary Text, Purposive Communication, Art Appreciation, and Bukidnon Cultural Studies within the school year 2020-2021 to the first semester of the school year 2021-2022. Because of the pandemic, there has been a shift in classroom interaction from regular face-to-face interaction to online or asynchronous platforms. For this reason, students have their responses to the teacher's posted online announcement.

The screenshots of the student's responses to the teacher's online announcement were analyzed based on the politeness strategies of [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#). These politeness strategies were positive, negative, bald-on-record, and off-record. These strategies helped the researcher analyze the collected data to get the expected result. The study followed several steps in gathering data: The first is constructing a research map. At this phase, the researcher read several kinds of research related to politeness strategies to learn about the topic, especially about the study's proponents. Also, the researcher decided on what theory would be the basis for the study. The second was creating a code guide. After constructing a research map, the researcher created a code guide. It was a guide to evaluate students' responses based on the theory used. The contents of the codeguide were the types of politeness strategies of [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), their definitions, and explanations of the given examples.

The third step was intra-coding the responses. In this step, the researcher took screenshots of the responses from the google classroom. After gathering the responses, the researcher placed them in the codebook. This codebook was a table where the students' responses were placed with corresponding columns for the different types of politeness strategies for coding. The fourth is inter-coding. After the researcher was finished coding the responses, the researcher submitted the coded data to the following experts for inter-coding. The inter-coders were professors of the university where the study was conducted. They were Doctors of Philosophy in English and Literature. Finally, after the inter-coding, the researcher tabulated the results.

3. RESULTS

The research question aimed to identify the politeness strategies utilized by the students of Bukidnon State University in responding to the online announcement made by their teacher in the google classroom.

Table 1 below shows the types of politeness strategies utilized by the students in responding to their teacher’s online announcement. As presented, there are four (4) types of politeness strategies namely: *positive politeness strategy (PPS)*, *negative politeness strategy (NPS)*, *bald-on record strategy (BORS)*, and *off-record strategy (ORS)*. The table also presents the gender (female-male) of the respondents, the frequency and percentage of these responses, and the overall frequency, percentage, and ranking.

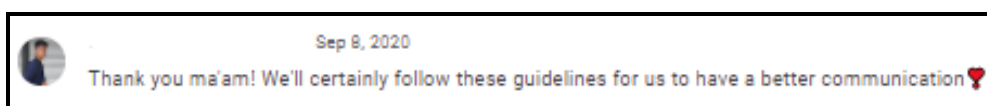
Table 1. Politeness strategies on students’ responses to teacher’s online announcement.

Types of politeness strategy	Gender						Overall (N=185)		
	Female (n=102)			Male (n=83)					
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
PPS	60	58.82	1	48	57.83	1	108	58.38	1
NPS	35	34.31	2	30	36.14	2	65	35.14	2
BORS	5	4.91	3	3	3.61	3	8	4.32	3
ORS	2	1.96	4	2	2.42	4	4	2.16	4
Total number of responses	103	100%		83	100%		185	100%	

Table 1 shows the politeness strategies utilized by the Bukidnon State University students in responding to their teacher’s online announcement. Among the four types of politeness strategies, the positive politeness strategy ranks the highest. The second is the negative politeness strategy, the third is bald-on-record strategy, and the fourth in rank is the off-record strategy.

A positive politeness strategy is the most frequently utilized politeness strategy. It may be due to the nature of the relationship between the students and the teacher. Students perceived teachers to be of a higher social class where students are highly required to respect them. Aside from that, students appeal to solidarity towards their teacher. Therefore, they want their teacher to feel good and respected through their friendly responses. As the students would most likely save face and avoid offending the teacher, they result to agree, give sympathy, and give assurance and understanding to the teacher. In other words, their responses aim to enhance the teacher’s positive face by considering the feeling and best interests of the teacher. Thus, their responses show closeness and understanding to the announcement. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a positive politeness strategy can be expressed through sub-strategies such as: seeking the hearer’s agreement; asserting common ground; noticing the hearer’s interest and wants; giving sympathy, understanding, and cooperation to the hearer; using group identity markers; exaggerating interest in, approval of, and sympathy for the hearer; intensifying speaker’s interest to the hearer; avoiding conflict or disagreement with the hearer; making a joke; presupposing speaker’s knowledge of and concern for hearer’s wants; making an offer or a promise; being optimistic; involving hearer and speaker activities; giving or asking for a reason; and assuming or asserting reciprocal.

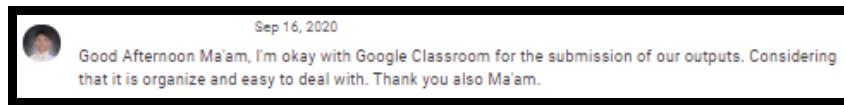
Based on the data collected, most students responded to the teacher’s announcement to show their agreement, support, or express their cooperation. Frame 1 exemplifies the positive politeness strategy.



Frame 1. PPS – agreeing.

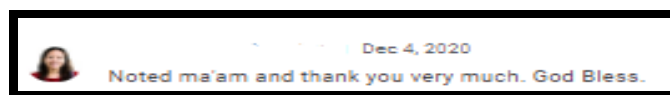
As seen in Frame 1, the student responded, “Thank you, ma’am! We’ll certainly follow these guidelines for us to have a better communication.” This response is written may be because the student is interested in the teacher’s wants, assuring to follow the guidelines posted. Additionally, the student’s response implies that both the teacher and the

student share the same interest, so they share the same goal to follow the guidelines stipulated in the online post. According to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), agreeing to the online post is a kind of positive politeness strategy that is done by repeating part or all of what the teacher is posting. Consequently, students' response in agreement with what is posted creates a positive face for the teacher.



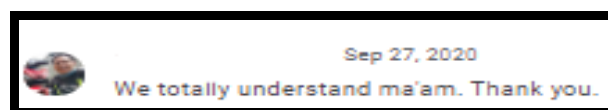
Frame 2. PPS - presupposing.

Another positive politeness strategy is shown in [Frame 2](#). The written response, *“Good Afternoon Ma’am, I’m okay with Google Classroom for the submissions of our outputs. Considering that it is organized and easy to deal with”*, is presupposing. The teacher announced her suggestion to let the student submit their output using Google Classroom. Consequently, both teachers and students believe that Google Classroom is a useful modality for submitting students’ output. The student’s act of believing about Google classroom before it is proven is presupposing which signifies positive politeness strategy. In addition, greeting the teacher displays positive politeness strategy. Greetings were used to minimize the distance between student and teacher and reduce the teacher’s disappointment by expressing friendliness.



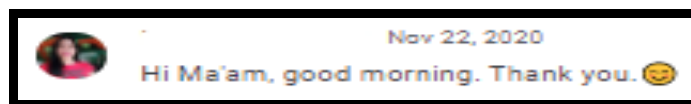
Frame 3. PPS – expressing gratitude.

As seen in [Frame 3](#), the student’s response, *“Noted ma’am and thank you very much. God bless,”* to the teacher’s online announcement indicates complying with the teacher’s instruction. Moreover, writing *“God bless you”* at the end of the response indicates respect not only between the student and the teacher but also for their relationship with God. The use of the politeness strategy enables the creation of a good atmosphere for learning and teaching process, as [Mahmud \(2019\)](#) posits that politeness is absolutely needed in the class, not only to acquire knowledge, but also to create good attitude. Thus, teachers and students are expected to apply politeness strategies in classroom interaction. Another positive politeness strategy is displayed in [Frame 4](#).



Frame 4. PPS – understanding.

As manifested in [Frame 4](#), the student commented, *“We totally understand ma’am. Thank you”* to teacher’s announcement. In this strategy, the student is showing sympathy, understanding, and cooperation to the teacher, which in turn makes a positive face. Writing this response employs politeness strategy through satisfying the teacher’s expectations of the student. Moreover, saying thank you for respond to the teacher’s online announcement displays politeness. This way of greeting may mean that students do not think that learning is a mere responsibility of the teacher. Thus, expressing gratitude may be deemed necessary on the part of the student. In addition, [Frame 5](#) also shows the same case where student wrote thank you after reading the online announcement posted.

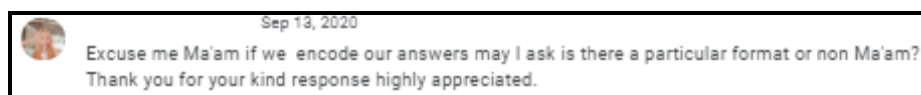


Frame 5. PPS – greeting and using an identity marker.

As projected in [Frame 5](#), a greeting like “*Hi Ma’am, good morning. Thank you,*” shows respectful behavior that creates a positive relationship between the teacher and the students. The student’s response to the instruction may indicate that the teacher greeted the students in her online announcement. As a result, reciprocity of greetings exists. It indicates that both the teacher and the student have an exemplary manner in google classroom interaction. It also symbolizes an acceptance of the students to the teacher’s authority. In addition, writing ‘thank you’ shows gratitude for the helpful information, new insights, or the instruction given. This expression may be used in this study to convey that the assignments posted are not considered a burden. In the same way, gratitude also indicates solidarity above the power, as proven by [Mahmud \(2019\)](#). This strategy is in line with [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) view that expressing thanks/gratitude is a courteous device of a positive politeness strategy that avoids face-threatening acts.

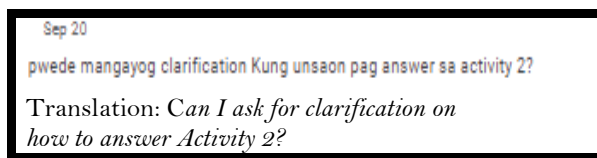
Furthermore, greeting the teacher with ‘*Hi Ma’am*’, signifies that the student observes formality and keeps the distance as a student. However, the word ‘*Hi*’ is added to make the response friendly. In addition, it indicates that the two parties have a good emotional relationship. According to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), using an identity marker such as ‘*Ma’am*’ is used in a positive politeness strategy.

The second among the four politeness strategies used is the negative politeness strategy (NPS). This strategy aims to reduce the interference with the hearer's freedom of action. The speaker’s strategy is to build a desire to preserve a certain degree of autonomy and act freely to his own will and not to be imposed by others. In addition, NPS is associated with any form of intrusion into a person’s self-determination such as order, suggestion, advice, reminder, threat, offer, promise, and help, [Correo \(2014\)](#). According to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), the speaker can perform this strategy by being indirect, using hedges, conveying pessimism in the utterance to express doubt, reducing the imposition, or respecting the hearer. In other words, this strategy is concerned with distance and formality through apologies, mitigation, and hedges. [Wardaugh \(2010\)](#) states that NPS leads to deference, apologizing, indirectness, and formality of the language used to show respectful behavior. [Frame 6](#) exemplifies the use of the negative politeness strategy.



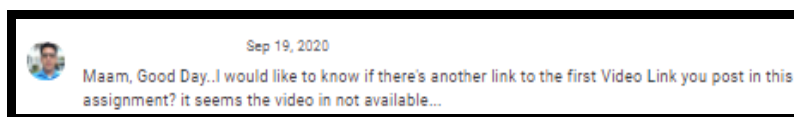
Frame 6. NPS – apologizing.

In [Frame 6](#), the teacher has posted an announcement that includes instructions for answering the module. The student responded, “*Excuse me Ma’am if we encode our answers may I ask is there a particular format or non-Ma’am? Thank you for your kind response highly appreciated.*” In this response, the student asks for the specific format without reading at the attached file for specific instruction. The failure to open the attached file may offend the teacher. However, because of the use of “excuse me and thank you”, the student appears polite and clueless of the specific instruction. Employing “*excuse me*” as a way of apologizing to the teacher may minimize imposition in asking the question. Apology, according to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), serves primarily to demonstrate respect rather than friendship, solidarity, or intimacy. Therefore, it plays an important role in negative politeness practices ([Al-Sobh, 2013](#); [Banikalef, Maros, Aladdi, & Al-natour, 2015](#)). In addition, it is utilized in responding to a teacher’s online announcement to lessen the unfriendly situation generated by the student to avoid negative face. Furthermore, NPS can be identified through the use of modal or modal auxiliary in a statement like *can, should, would, or must*. An example is illustrated in [Frame 7](#).



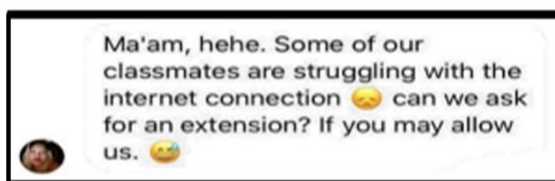
Frame 7. NPS – modal verb “can”.

As illustrated in [Frame 7](#), the response "pwede mangayog clarification kung unsaon pag answer sa activity 2?" is vernacular. Based on the translation, "can I ask for clarification on how to answer activity 2," the student is using the modal verb can. Can in English is one of the most commonly used modal verbs. It is used to express opportunity or ability to request or offer permission, and to show possibility or impossibility. In the context of this response, the student is requesting an explanation from the teacher. According to [Fraser \(2010\)](#) the use of fillers could be categorized as hedges or words and expressions in the form of modals, fillers, and tag questions can attenuate the force of speech acts. This filler serves important functions in communication since using these them can become ways to be conventionally indirect, creating negative politeness strategy ([Brown & Levinson, 1987](#)). For this reason, this response belongs to negative politeness strategy. Another example is shown in [Frame 8](#).



Frame 8. NPS – modal verb “would”.

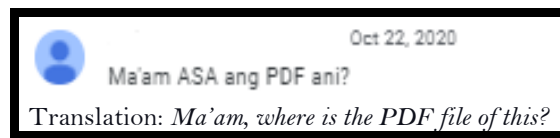
Another example of a negative politeness strategy through modal is shown in [Frame 8](#). The student responds to the teacher’s announcement by asking, “Ma’am, Good Day... I would like to know if there’s another link to the first Video link you post in this assignment? it seems the video is not available...” This response is requesting the teacher to provide another link as the ‘would and seem’ can soften the possible negative impression of the teacher upon reading the response. The student uses ‘would’ to express a very polite or formal request while using seem in his statement to indicate uncertainty about the claim regarding the unavailable link. As [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) state that negative politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving offense. Indirectly stating that the link is unavailable is an act of politeness. Evidently, according to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), negative politeness is basically an avoidance strategy, [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) as referenced by [Boicu \(2007\)](#). Realizations of negative politeness methods include guarantees that the speaker is aware of and respects the addressee's freedom of action. This concept is shown in [Frame 9](#).



Frame 9. NPS – modal verb “may”.

As seen in [Frame 9](#), the student's response to the announcement posted, "Ma'am, hehe. Some of our classmates are struggling with the internet connection. Can we ask for an extension? If you may allow," is an example of a negative politeness strategy. Aside from using modal can, the student respects the teacher as the addressee by giving her the freedom of action by stating at the end of the statement, "If you may allow us." Thus, it signifies that the student knows her status as a student. Furthermore, it indicates deference as she humbles herself to get a positive response from the teacher, treating the teacher as the superior or of a higher social status than her.

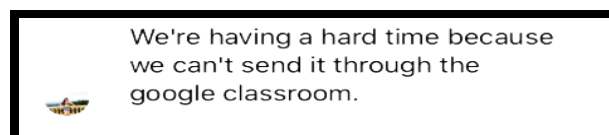
The bald-on-record (BORS) method is the third of the four politeness strategies employed by the students. According to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#), bald-on-record is used to communicate directly to the listeners. Because the speaker speaks efficiently and directly, this method reduces misunderstanding and miscommunication amongst interlocutors. Thus, the utterances must be delivered directly, vividly, and unequivocally. [Fitriyani and Andriyanti \(2020\)](#) notes that [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) identified two instances in which the speaker used BORS. The first scenario is the failure to minimize the facial threat. When the speaker employs the approach of not softening the face threat, four conditions apply: (1) when they are in an urgent situation, (2) the speaker has more power than the hearer, (3) the speaker wants to demonstrate sympathy, and (4) the speaker does not want to keep the face. Furthermore, they claim that the second scenario happens when this method is 'really orientated to face.' It appears in three contexts: greetings or invitations, farewells, and offers. Frame 10 is the exemplification of the bald-on-record strategy.



Frame 10. BORS.

As illustrated in [Frame 10](#), the student commented in vernacular, “*Ma'am asa ang PDF ani?*” and the translation would be “*Ma'am, where is the PDF file of this?*”. In this situation, the teacher posted an announcement about lesson 3 for the class, attaching links and the corresponding word and pdf files. Maybe after reading what the teacher has posted, the student then rashly asks the teacher for a pdf file even without checking what is on the attachments. Finally, the student directly and unambiguously asks the teacher about the pdf file. The student's response does not attempt to lessen the imposition on the hearer as s/he did not strive to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. Thus, according to [Mulyono et al. \(2019\)](#), listeners may find it impolite and rude even if the student's intention is to avoid misunderstanding.

Among the four-politeness strategy, the least utilized by the students is the off-record strategy (ORS). In this strategy, the speaker engages in face-threatening behavior by expressing intentions in an indirect or implicative manner. According to [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) in [Siburian \(2016\)](#) a communicative act is off-record if it is executed so that no single obvious communicative interpretation can be attributed. Furthermore, [Bousfield \(2008\)](#) noted that, the FTA operates off-the-record, typically through the use of an indirect illocutionary act with multiple interpretations, allowing for plausible deniability on the part of the speaker if the intended recipient takes offense at the face threat inherent in the utterance. Consider [Frame 11](#) as an example of ORS.



Frame 11. ORS.

The teacher in the scenario has posted a follow-up announcement reminding students to pass their major requirement – a video demonstration. The student responded, “*We're having a hard time because we can't send it through the google classroom.*” The response of the student may be written to let the teacher decide on what particular alternative action can be done in the situation. Various interpretations could be drawn from the off-record response such as the student wants an extension of the deadline of the requirement. She might want the teacher to suggest another platform on where the student can pass the project, or s/he may want the teacher to alter their requirement that can be easily submitted using google classroom. The listener cannot be assured that a hint has been dropped;

the speaker can plausibly assert an alternate interpretation. Whatever may the hearer interpret from the response, the speaker can credibly claim an alternative interpretation. In this strategy, the speaker can speak off the record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret what they hear.

Finally, this study attempted to establish whether there was a difference in politeness strategies used by males and females. The total number of responses was 185. As indicated in [Table 1](#), the total number of female responses was 102, while the total number of male responses was 83. According to the presentation, 60 or 58.87 % of the 102 responses used a positive politeness strategy. At the same time, there were 35 or 34.31% of negative politeness strategies in the female responses. A bald-on-the-record strategy was used by five of these female responses, or 4.91 percent. Only 2 or 1.96 % of the female responses used an off-record strategy.

Furthermore, out of 83 male responses, 48 or 57.83% used a positive politeness strategy. While 30 of the male responses, or 36.14 %, utilized a negative politeness strategy. In addition, three of these male responses, or 3.61 %, used a bald-on-record strategy. Finally, two of the male responses, or 2.42 % employed an off-record politeness strategy.

As seen in the result, there is a difference between males and females in employing politeness strategies. Furthermore, it shows that females mostly employ positive politeness, and males mostly employ negative politeness strategy. The significant difference in employing politeness strategies between males and females may be due to these reasons:

First, politeness and gender are influenced by a related cultural factor. The gender of the speaker influences the choice of the politeness strategies to be used, and the actual use of the said strategies may not always be congruent with gender preconceptions ([Bacha, Bahous, & Diab, 2012](#); [White, 1989](#)). In other words, even if females are thought to be politer than males, some factors such as linguistic, contextual, and relational elements may influence students' responses to teacher announcements. Moreover, individual cultural differences may play an essential role in choosing the politeness strategies to be used, especially in a teacher and student interaction. Employing politeness strategies may differ as the students have different cultural backgrounds and individual differences. Student's understanding of what the announcement is, how the announcement is made, and how the students view the teacher may also affect the use of politeness strategy. In addition, [Manik and Hutagaol \(2015\)](#) claimed that social distance in a relationship is an essential element influencing students' employment of politeness strategy. As a result, people in intimate relationships are more direct and less polite than those in distant relationships.

Furthermore, according to [Lakoff \(1975\)](#), there is a vast difference between classes taught by males and females in employing politeness strategies. Females appear to be friendlier to teachers of the same gender. As a result, females employed a positive politeness strategy among all the strategies mentioned by [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#). On the other hand, males frequently employed a more negative politeness strategy in responding to the teacher of the opposite sex to keep their social distance. Aside from that, appearing too friendly toward a teacher of the opposite gender is considered inappropriate.

Finally, as the result shows, the bald-on-record strategy is more frequently utilized by females than males because the female students feel comfortable and intimate with teachers of the same sex as this type of strategy is frequent among people who know each other well, who are at ease in their environment. In this occurrence, it is safe to say that the teacher and students have a good learning environment as the female students do not only treat their teacher as a mentor but as a family. Aside from that, males seldom used the bald-on-record strategy as the male students maintain a social distance to avoid the teacher's misinterpretations of their responses. In addition, the off-record strategy was also the least utilized among the politeness strategies for both males and females. However, male students had a higher percentage than female students. It may be because male students give the teacher the freedom to interpret the intended meaning of the responses given by the male students. Through this, the male students show respect as this strategy is non-imposing on the teacher's part.

4. DISCUSSION

The researcher determined politeness strategies in the students' responses in three semesters. Four politeness strategies were employed in the students' responses: positive, negative, bald-on-record, and off the record. As shown in [Frame 1](#), expressing gratitude is an expression of a positive politeness strategy. The students primarily expressed this after the given online announcement by the teacher. This strategy is in line with [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) theory which indicates that expressing thank you is considered a polite way that can avoid face-threatening acts. As proven by [Mahmud \(2019\)](#), gratitude also indicates solidarity above power. In this study, the use of gratitude was directed to the teacher. It may mean that the students used this expression to convey that the assignments or the tasks in the online announcement were welcomed and were not considered burdens.

In addition, [frame 2](#) showed the expressions of positive politeness strategy greeting and presupposing. Greetings were used to minimize the distance between students and teachers and reduce the teacher's disappointment by expressing friendliness, which is in line with [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#). Moreover, when the teacher announced her suggestion to submit the student's output using Google Classroom, the students responded and believed that Google Classroom is a valuable modality for submitting their output. The student's act of believing about Google classroom before it is proven is presupposing. Presupposing indicates positive politeness strategies as the student considers the teacher's wants by agreeing with what the teacher has just said.

In addition, [Frames 3,4, and 5](#) displayed positive politeness strategies by expressing the address term "Ma'am." [Fitriyani and Andriyanti \(2020\)](#) said that address terms were used to establish a moral status for the teacher. However, using the teacher's names as a positive politeness strategy in the Philippine educational context has not been explored as students are used to calling the professors, mentors, and teachers as Ma'am or Sir. Aside from that, showing sympathy, understanding, and cooperation with the teacher expressed a positive politeness strategy.

On the other hand, the student also exhibited another politeness strategy: the negative politeness strategy. As shown in [frame 6](#), "I am sorry or excuse me" in the interaction between the students and teacher was an expression of negative politeness strategy. Using the negative politeness strategies is to minimize the imposition. For example, [Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) explained that an apology functions as a way to express respect rather than friendliness and intimacy. According to the study's findings, expressing an apology is applied to the teacher who holds a higher status than the students. Aside from that, [frames 6, 7, 8, and 9](#) used hedges and modals such as would and may. Using hedges and modals maintains the distance and formality among students in responding to a teacher's announcement ([Brown and Levinson \(1987\)](#) as cited in [Mills \(2003\)](#)).

Finally, the bald-on-record and off-the-record were two politeness strategies that the students' least used. [Frames 10 and 11](#) showed expressions of these strategies. It was found out that students seldom used bald-on-record as the expression of this strategy might be misinterpreted by the teacher. While the students' responses employed an off-record strategy, it allowed the teacher to interpret the intended meaning of the utterance by herself. As a result, it would create different interpretations that would send a message different from what the student intends to say. For these reasons, students used these two strategies the least.

5. CONCLUSION

Politeness between teacher-students has been well-explored over the years, but primarily in face-to-face communication. Today, the study of politeness has shifted to online interaction among teachers and students because of the change of operations in the educational setting. For this reason, the researcher designed this study to identify the politeness strategies employed by students in responding to the teacher's online announcement within three semesters in the Google classroom. Furthermore, this study has also explored the significant difference in the employment of the politeness strategies between male and female students. In this study, the teacher has primarily initiated the online interaction by posting in the Google classroom, such as delivering instructions, making announcements, encouraging, motivating, and answering students' questions. On the other hand, the students

responded mainly to the teacher's online announcement or instruction by showing respect and gratitude and expressing agreement, confirmation, and cooperation, called politeness strategies.

This study presents the transcripts of comments screenshots that showcase the politeness strategies employed by students. Among the four politeness strategies identified by Brown and Levinson (1987), the positive politeness strategy ranks the highest, followed by the negative politeness strategy as the second, bald-on record as the third, and off-record as the fourth, and the least employed politeness strategy in the students' responses. On the other hand, there is also a significant difference between male and female students in employing politeness strategies in their responses. It is found that female students frequently employed more positive and bald-on-record politeness strategies than male students. In comparison, male students used the negative and off-record politeness strategies more frequently than female students. Although the results explicate the difference between males' and females' utilization of politeness strategies, cultural differences may play an essential role in choosing the politeness strategies to be used, especially in a teacher and student interaction. Related cultural factors influence politeness and gender. Gender may influence students' choice of the politeness strategies employed. However, the actual use of the strategies may not always be congruent with gender preconceptions (Bacha et al., 2012; White, 1989). Some students do not perform the gender role given to them at birth. Consequently, some linguistic, contextual, and relational factors may influence students' responses to teachers' announcements even if females are politer than males, as Lakoff (1975) claims and supported by Tannen (1990).

The sudden shift in the educational setup has caused students to encounter different problems in their families and online classes. In addition, the e-learning system's frequent network disconnection and internet data limitations are problems that occur on a day-to-day, if not hourly, basis. As a result, online learning does not seem to encourage optimistic expectations. However, regardless of the situation and issues that the students experienced, the findings demonstrate that students still managed to employ politeness strategies. It is believed that the success of the English language learning process is enhanced by effective classroom interaction, and it can be established by employing politeness strategies. Thus, the findings of this study would have a significant contribution to the teaching and learning process at Bukidnon State University. These findings can be used to influence the students and teachers on the employment of politeness strategies to achieve effective classroom engagement for effective learning, whether face-to-face or online interaction.

Furthermore, the findings could also contribute to the understanding of employing politeness strategies among the Bukidnon State University employees to avoid conflict in the workplace. The outcomes of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on politeness research, particularly in an online classroom setting and, more specifically, in an Asian context. This study was limited to the students' responses to the teacher's online announcement in the Google classroom within the three semesters.

Indeed, employing politeness strategies is influenced by cultural background and personal choice. As the phenomenon of gender and politeness needs further studies, there were no logical conclusions regarding the various ways men and women employed politeness strategies in their interaction since everybody has the right to choose whether or not to utilize gender stereotypes in his language. Nevertheless, the students' politeness strategies in their responses manifest the Filipino culture that Filipino can still manage to smile, laugh, and help despite their adversities.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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