



POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED IN INDONESIAN AND AMERICAN BEAUTY PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS

Sifa Nurfausia¹, Ulfa Haera², Fatimah Hidayahni Amin³

¹English Education Department, Post Graduate Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

³English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

sifanurfausiadahlan05@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the politeness strategies used in Indonesian and American advertisements, especially in beauty product advertisements in each country. The objective of this research is to find out the differences of the politeness strategies employed in Indonesian and American beauty product Advertisements. The researcher used a theory proposed by Brown and Levinson regarding Politeness strategy. The method used in this research is a descriptive and qualitative method. Note taking is used as the instrument to get the valid data. The fundamental difference between Indonesian advertisements and American advertisements is the strategy that the advertisers used. The best strategy in Indonesian advertisement is Bald on record, while in American advertisement is positive politeness strategy.

Keywords: *Politeness strategy, advertisements, beauty product*

Introduction

Humans are social creatures, which means they can't live alone and need to interact with others to meet their needs. They can't do everything by themselves; they need help from other people. When they communicate and interact with others, they use tools to share messages. According to S. S Stevens (1950), communication is when an organism reacts to something it experiences. This means that communication happens when a stimulus affects an organism and it responds. If the organism ignores the stimulus, then communication hasn't happened. Likewise, if a message isn't answered, the communication isn't complete.

Language is one of the ways that people communicate. The primary function of language, according to Armstrong and Ferguson (2010) is to facilitate self-expression, information sharing, and assistance requests in various contexts. People's lives depend heavily on language. Language is utilized to exchange ideas, messages, information, advice, suggestions, and more, according to Gunawan and Aprizawati (2018). Requests, invitations, cautions, news, entertainment, and ads are just a few examples of the different kinds of information that can be included in the messages.

Nowadays, advertisements play an important role in a world of business. It functions as an instrument to introduce and promote a product, service, person, idea and many things in the society. At its most basic, according to Stobart (2008) advertisements communicate what is accessible as well as where it may be obtained. They aim to give consumers information in order to gain more business and lower the transaction costs associated with selling products and services to consumers. The purpose of the advertisement's appearance is to introduce consumers to the goods and services in order to excite or influence audience attitudes.

These days, advertisements can be found in any media, such as social media, billboard, radio, magazine, television and even a piece of paper that is patched up on the wall or tree. The way they present and deliver the advertisement will determine its success. As stated by Pishghadam and Navari (2012) advertisers employ a variety of strategies to draw the attention of their target audience while creating commercials, and being polite is one of those tactics.

Politeness can mean different things in different places because it depends on social, cultural, and situational factors during interactions. According to Kramsch (1997), people who belong to a social group (like family, community, profession, or ethnicity) create a shared understanding through their interactions with each other. The way a community uses language shows their shared attitudes, beliefs, and values, including what they choose to say or not say and how they express it. Culture greatly influences language norms. Nida (2020) notes that Indonesians and Americans have different ways of communicating based on their cultural backgrounds. For example, Americans tend to express their thoughts and expectations directly, while Indonesians are often more indirect in their conversations. They use fewer words to avoid jumping straight to their point or implying meanings. This approach helps maintain harmony in conversations and prevents losing face.

The previous research is essential in order to upgrade the researcher's insight about the theory and for adding researcher references in writing the research. Research conducted by Khalik and Supatmiwati (2015) discussed the use of politeness tactics as a persuasive tool in magazine ads that are distributed in popular tourist destinations in Lombok. Their research aims to investigate the practical role that civility plays as a communication tool in the advertising industry. The main objective of their study is to compare and analyze the politeness strategies employed and modified in English and Indonesian ads in order to determine the factors that contribute to their persuasiveness. To do this, 100 advertisements in Bahasa Indonesia and English were collected from publications mostly located at Lombok's main tourist destinations. The researcher discovered several parallels and divergences between this study and the earlier one mentioned above.

The similarity that is found is that the studies have some purpose, which is to find and investigate the politeness strategy by using the theory that was proposed by Brown and Levinson. On the other hand, the difference is that the writer chose a diverse object of the research. The research by Khalik and Supatmiwati (2015) also used an advertisement as an object but it focused on printed advertisement. Meanwhile, in this research the researcher will focus on the advertisement in the form of video.

When communication is carried out, there are two crucial components that have to exist, which are the speaker and the hearer. Discourse is everything that comes out of the speaker whether it is spoken or written language. Moreover, it can be said that discourse analysis is processing to comprehend everything that gives meaning to the speaker's utterance, both spoken or written form that are used to understand the meaning of the speaker's intention in our daily interactions. As stated by Alek (2023) discourse analysis utilizes all forms of written text and spoken data, ranging from informal to highly institutionalized forms of speech, and it is concerned with the research of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. In other words, discourse analysis can potentially be a useful approach if you were investigating someone's perceptions over a particular topic and analyzing the intended meaning of the certain words rather than just their definition or frequency.

According to Brown and Yule (1985), discourse analysis is an analysis of language in use along with its purposes and function that are designed to serve human affairs. Discourse analysis

means we have to take into consideration the text's individuality. People must understand that in society, other people use language in a variety of ways and contexts. It is necessary to understand contexts if people want to understand language. Although words, sentences, and clauses have meaning on their own, one may understand everything by examining the surrounding words, context, and context.

In this research, discourse analysis can be used to analyze various aspects, including the choice of words, persuasive appeals, narrative structures, intertextuality, rhetorical devices, and the portrayal of social groups. By applying discourse analysis to advertisements, researchers can uncover underlying messages, implied meanings, and the strategies used to persuade and influence consumers, including the politeness strategy that is employed in selected advertisements.

Advertisement plays a significant role in modern societies. According to Richards and Curran (2002), advertising is an experience, representation, or impression that influences how we feel about a specific product. They give advertisers a chance to share essential information about their items with their target customers. A piece of advertising which does nothing else but to help familiarize the audience with the brand name and build a certain minimum level of trust in the product, therefore it can be relied on to contribute the sales.

According to Ambar (2013) the main goal of advertising is for modifying or influencing audience perceptions of a particular topic, in this case, consumer perceptions. Advertising's physical appearance seeks to introduce customers to items and services in order to attract their attention or influence them. As desired by the producers, this will encourage changes in customer behavior.

(Khalik and Supatmiwati 2015) emphasize that it is essential for advertisers to grab consumers' attention and build social and emotional connections with their customers by using politeness strategies in their ads, while also considering various factors to achieve this. They identify two main functions of language: transactional and interactional. Transactional language focuses on conveying and expressing information, where the speaker aims to inform the listener. In contrast, interactional language serves to express social relationships and personal attitudes, helping to maintain human connections.

To sum up, this research seeks to examine the politeness strategies employed in beauty product advertisements in both Indonesia and America. It will use Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness strategies, which includes Bald on Record, Off Record, Negative Politeness, and Positive Politeness. The Bald on Record strategy involves the speaker communicating their message clearly and directly, allowing the listener to respond without worrying about facing threats. Positive politeness is when the speaker makes an effort to support the listener's positive face, showing that their desires and values are respected. Politeness strategies focus on satisfying the listener's face needs, aiming to maintain their positive image. Negative politeness refers to actions taken to ensure that the speaker does not restrict the listener's freedom or attention. Off-the-record communication occurs when a message is conveyed in a way that makes it hard to identify a single intention, giving the speaker multiple interpretations to defend.

The gap this research aims to fill is to identify the differences in politeness strategies used by Indonesian and American beauty product advertisements to persuade and attract customers. The advertisements will be selected from official YouTube accounts that have at least 5,000 views and are between 45 to 60 seconds long.

Research Methodology

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. Tenny et al. (2022) state that qualitative research offers a deeper understanding of real-world problems and helps in developing hypotheses and interpreting data. The research utilizes Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness strategies, which consists of Bald on Record, Off Record, Negative Politeness, and Positive Politeness. The emphasis is on analyzing and describing the politeness strategies found in beauty product advertisements from Indonesia and America. The collected data were from popular beauty product ads in both countries, sourced from official YouTube accounts. The researchers took the advertisements from the official Youtube account of the brand as the object of the research. Hence, they limited the brands, which are from Indonesia: Emina, Somethinc and Avoskin, and from the United States, which are Glossier, Fenty beauty, and Clinique. There were several kinds of product advertisements, such as lipstick, powder, sunscreen and other types of beauty products. Here are the links to the advertisements:

1. Emina : <https://youtu.be/yz-LhBhH5jo>
2. Somethinc : <https://youtu.be/PAvaJvLauCE>
3. Avoskin : <https://youtu.be/DLwk41Eouz0>
4. Glossier : https://youtu.be/DZAQfvNr_7g
5. Fenty Beauty : <https://youtu.be/KKSTk5rkCpM>
6. Clinique : <https://youtu.be/IFGcYyFm9t4>

The researchers used note-taking as the primary instrument to gather relevant information on politeness strategies. The data collection involves selecting advertisements, watching the videos, and transcribing the utterances. Once collected, the data were coded, analysed, and categorized according to Brown and Levinson's framework. Finally, the researchers provided interpretations and explanations of the politeness strategies found in the advertisements.

Results and Discussion

Results

This part consists of the data analysis of Indonesian and American advertisements about Politeness strategy that they used to persuade their customers. The purpose of this research is to find the differences in Politeness Strategies used in Indonesian and American beauty product advertisements. Based on the data analysis, the writer found all kinds of politeness strategies. They are bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record strategy.

1. Indonesian Advertisements

In this research, the writer presents the finding based on the politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson's (1987) that consist of 4 strategies (bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record strategy). There are 3 advertisements from Indonesian brands. Which are, Emina, Avoskin and Somethinc, that will be arranged based on the most viewed video on Youtube.

a. Bald on record strategy

There are some utterances found in the Indonesian advertisement that used a Bald on record strategy will be appeared below:

- i. Emina
Excerpt 1.

Kombinasikan warna sesukamu untuk ombre look yang menyegarkan

In this utterance the advertiser suggested combining the colors of the product. The advertiser delivered the suggestion in unambiguous way and without any effort to minimize the threat to face of the hearer. It can be seen from the utterance that the advertiser used a bald on record strategy by giving the hearer clear direction and avoiding the danger of being misunderstood. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987), bald on record strategy occurs when the speaker threatens the hearer in maximum efficiency other than wants to satisfy the hearer's face.

ii. Somethinc

Somethinc is a brand from Indonesia that uses the least bald on record in their advertisements. There is only 1 utterance that indicated using bald on record strategy.

Excerpt 2.

Kenalin nih bestie baru gua somethinc low Ph gentle jelly cleanser.

In this utterance, it can be seen that the advertiser used imperative sentences by telling the speaker to get to know the product. Therefore, there is an indication that the advertiser used a bald on record strategy, because the advertiser delivered the message clearly without any effort to satisfy the face or minimize the threat to the hearer. As stated by Brown and Levinson's (1987) the primary reason for Bald on Record strategy usage is S wishes to carry out the FTA with the highest efficiency rather than satisfying H's face, even to a small degree.

iii. Avoskin

Avoskin is a brand from Indonesia that uses bald on record the most in their advertisements.

Excerpt 3.

Sinar uv masih bisa masuk ke ruangan menembus kaca jendela sampai ke kulit. Apalagi kalau outdoor, sunscreen is a must.

In this utterance, the advertiser used a Bald on record strategy. It can be seen that the prime reason the advertiser delivered the statement is only to inform the hearer effectively without hedging or minimizing the imposition to the hearer. One of the reasons for using bald on record is the speaker wants to do the FTA rather than want to satisfy the face of the hearer. As stated by Brown and Levinson (1987:95), there are two motivations for the speaker to carry out the Bald on record strategy. One of them is the non-minimization of face threats, which will occur when both speaker and hearer are aware of the importance of maximum efficiency so that no face redress needs to be performed.

b. Positive Politeness Strategy

i. Emina

Emina is a brand from Indonesia that use positive strategy the least in their advertisements.

Excerpt 4.

Formulanya yang long lasting, gak perlu touch up seharian

In this utterance, the advertiser seems to know what the hearer wants by providing information regarding the excellence of the products. By taking a consideration about what the hearer wants, there is an indication that the advertiser used a positive strategy by maintaining and fulfilling the positive face of the hearer. One of the forms of Positive strategy usage is when the speaker decides to give a gift to the hearer by fulfilling the desires of the hearer. As stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) the positive-politeness act of gift-giving, which includes not only actual goods but also human-relations desires such as the want to be liked, cared about, acknowledged, and listened to, and so on

ii. Somethinc

There are some utterances from the selected advertisement in Somethinc that indicated using Positive politeness strategy.

Excerpt 5.

Sabun pembersih wajah terbaik yang lembut terbersih di hidup gua

In this part, it can be seen that the advertiser tried to persuade the customer using positive strategy. One of the indications in positive strategy is the use of exaggerative words. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) another aspect of positive-politeness output is the use of exaggerated or emphatic words or particles. By saying 'the best facial cleanser in my life', the advertiser exaggerates the statement and tries to satisfy the positive face of the hearer.

iii. Avoskin

There are 3 utterances from the selected Avoskin advertisement that indicated using Positive politeness strategy.

Excerpt 6.

Diformulasikan untuk melindungi dari sinar uva dan uvb. Tenangkan kulit, teksturnya ringan dan mudah menyerap.

In this utterance, the speaker tried to maintain a positive face of the hearer by giving some positive information about the product to the hearer. By making a good story and presenting the benefits that the product has, the advertiser intended to raise and trigger the interest of the hearer in order to satisfy and maintain the positive face of the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) that Positive strategy can be used by adding an attractive story to the conversation in order to intensify the interest of the hearer.

c. Negative Politeness Strategy

In this strategy, there are no utterances found in selected advertisements from Indonesia that applied negative politeness strategy.

d. Off Record Strategy

i. Emina

Emina is a brand from Indonesia that uses off record strategy the most in their advertisements among Indonesian advertisements.

Excerpt 7.

Yang menghasilkan 3 magical colors, membuat hariharimu lebih berwarna

In this utterance, the advertiser used a word 'magic' to describe the color of the product as if the product has a magic in it that can change your look. By saying this metaphoric word, the hearer may have a number of interpretations to the utterance that indicates the utterance is one of the forms of Off record communicative act. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the act of communication is off record, if the communication is carried out in a way that makes it improbable that only one clear communicative objective can be connected to it.

ii. Somethinc.

There is only one utterance found in the selected Somethinc advertisement that used off record strategy.

Excerpt 8.

Dulu gua pikir sabun cuci muka yang bagus itu yang banyak busanya dan bikin kulit gua kesat. Tapi kok malah bikin kulit muka gua ketarik ya?

This utterance indicated that the advertiser used Off Record strategy. It can be seen that the advertiser delivered a question without any intention to get the answer. The advertiser asked about the result that he got after using a cleanser that he thinks is good. By asking that question, the advertiser wanted to tell the hearer that his opinion regarding 'a good face cleanser' is false.

iii. Avoskin

There is only one utterance found in the selected Avoskin advertisement that used off record strategy.

Excerpt 9.

Banyak yang bilang pakai sunscreen kalo kena matahari aja

In this utterance the advertiser used Off record strategy. It can be seen that the advertiser seems to over generalize a statement by giving a general opinion. Giving a general statement is used to avoid face threatening act that result in the speaker leaving the hearer to decide whether that common opinion applies to him or not. As pointed out by Brown and Levinson (1987)

2. American Advertisement

In this research, the writer presents the finding in selected American advertisements based on the politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987),

that consist of 4 strategies (bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record strategy). There are three selected American advertisements, namely Glossier, Fenty Beauty and Clinique that are arranged based on the most viewed video in Youtube.

a. Bald on record strategy

i. Fenty Beauty

There are utterances found in selected Fenty beauty advertisements that indicated using Bald on record strategy.

Excerpt 10.

To apply just shake and use 2 or 3 drops. Blend it with your fingers or you can use the precision make up sponge or the full body foundation brush to buff it into the skin.

In this utterance the advertiser used a Bald on record strategy. The main reason for Bald on record happened is when the speaker considers that doing FTA with maximum efficiency more important than satisfying the Face of the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It can be seen that the advertiser gave some instructions about how to use the product properly.

ii. Clinique

There are utterances found in selected Clinique advertisements that indicated using Bald on record strategy.

Excerpt 11.

Start in the center applying at the highest points where the Sun hits first. Massage outward covering your entire face. Massage in until fully sheer; this may take 60 to 90 seconds for the deepest of skin tones. Plumped glowing skin, no white cast here.

In these utterances, the advertiser used a bald on record strategy. It can be seen that the advertiser gave some instructions about how to use the product properly in imperative form. Moreover, one of the motivations for FTA bald-on-record (nonredressed) can be found in the task orientation, which may explain the type of instruction and paradigm to be used (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

iii. Glossier

Glossier is a brand from the United State that used the least Positive Politeness strategy in their advertisements.

Excerpt 12.

G-suits feels like my own lips. The texture is creamy, lush, a really beautiful finish. Effortless

In this utterance the advertiser used Positive strategy to persuade the hearer. It can be seen in the utterance that the advertiser tried to draw attention by providing them with the excellence of the product. By directly sharing the advantages of the product, the advertiser can make the hearer interested in this product. This kind of communication is one of the forms

of politeness strategy because there is an indication that the speaker is trying to satisfy the positive face of the hearer. As stated by Brown and Levinson (1987), another way of the positive strategy usage is when the speaker wants to intensify the interest of the hearer by making a good story.

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ii. Fenty Beauty

Excerpt 14.

This is the perfect foundation for no makeup makeup days. It's just evens out my skin tone and delivers the soft blurring finish.

In this utterance, the advertiser used a positive strategy. The advertiser seems to attract the attention of the hearer by convincing them that the product is perfect for them who wants to get the natural looks. Therefore, it can be seen by the way the advertiser tried to exaggerate the interest of the hearer by telling about the excellence of the product. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the use of exaggerated or emphatic words or particles is another characteristic of this type of positive politeness.

iii. Clinique

Excerpt 15.

Moisture Surge SPF 28 Shear hydrator is here to give you all-day glow.

In this utterance, there is an indication that the advertiser used a positive strategy to persuade the hearer. The advertiser said that the product, which is a Moisture Surge SPF 28 Shear hydrator, exists to give the customer an all- day glow. It seems that the advertiser promises the

consumer that the product can make the hearer glowing all day. By giving a promise to the hearer, the advertiser can satisfy the positive face of the hearer. As stated by Brown and Levinson (1987), offers and promises are the obvious outcome of using this strategy (positive strategy)

c. Negative Politeness strategy

In this strategy, there is an utterance that indicated using negative politeness but also using a positive politeness that will be explained in utterances that applied more than one type of strategies section.

d. Off Record Strategy

i. Glossier

Glossier is the only brand from selected American advertisements that employed off record strategy in their utterance

Excerpt 16.

G-suit is a bold statement that doesn't even feel like you're making it

This utterance includes an Off record strategy because the advertiser described the product using metaphor. The advertiser said the product is a bold statement which can be interpreted as an expression of brave and strong appearance but also can be interpreted as an expression of confidence. One of the forms of Off record strategy usage is metaphor, because by using metaphor to describe the product means that the product is explained in an indirect and unclear way that can provide a number of interpretations to the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a communication act is off record if it is performed in an unambiguous way.

Discussion

There are similarities and differences between Indonesian advertisement and American advertisement based on the type used in the politeness strategy. The following similarities are found between the type of strategies used in Indonesian Advertisement and American advertisement. Firstly, all the advertisements, whether from Indonesia and the United State, used Positive Politeness strategy in their utterances. Most of the strategies used to intensify the interest of the hearer by providing them with a good story about the product. The advertiser tried to maintain a positive face of the hearer by giving some positive information about the product to the hearer. By making a good story and presenting the benefits that the product has, the advertiser intended to raise and trigger the interest of the hearer in order to satisfy and maintain the positive face of the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Positive strategy can be used by adding an attractive story to the conversation in order to intensify the interest of the hearer.

Secondly, the similarity found between Indonesian and American advertisements is they rarely used negative politeness strategy in their utterances. None of the utterances found in Indonesian advertisements used negative politeness strategy, while in American advertisement only one utterance found that indicated used negative politeness strategy. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987), the speaker goes off record if there are multiple clearly identifiable. So, the speaker cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent.

Based on the findings, the fundamental difference between Indonesian advertisements and American advertisements is the strategy that the advertisers used. The best strategy in Indonesian

advertisement is Bald on record, while in American advertisement is positive politeness strategy. According to Nida (2020) the way Indonesians and Americans communicate with one another has a distinct pattern. Importantly, it is regarding directness. Anglo Americans express themselves openly about what they want, do not want and think. Meanwhile, Indonesians are frequently indirect conservators. People in Western cultures tend to be individualistic and view themselves as independent individuals who strive for self-improvement, which is closely associated with high levels of self-esteem and confidence. With this high level of confidence, American advertisers often focus on highlighting product features and excellence, resulting in the frequent use of positive politeness strategies in their utterances (Pham 2022).

Cultural values can be a factor that makes a difference in the strategies used in advertising. The use of bald on record strategy as the most common strategy found in Indonesian advertisements can be influenced by the advertiser's culture. Asian culture prioritizes relationships among society that lead to their way of advertising by giving suggestions and advice in the form of imperatives to consumers to use the advertised products. Similar to Indonesian advertisement, the use of positive politeness strategy as the most used strategy is also influenced by cultural values. Western society emphasizes individualism and independence (Humphrey and Bliuc 2021) and (Falk, Carl 2009). This is closely related to self-enhancement and high levels of self-esteem that make them focus on achievement and success. This can be seen in American advertisements that focus on conveying interesting information about quality of the products that can attract the attention of consumers.

American Advertiser is more variative in persuading the consumer since they used all types of Politeness strategy in their advertisement. Although negative strategy and off record strategy rarely used in American advertisements. Meanwhile, in Indonesian advertisements, only three of four types of politeness strategies were found, which are Bald on record, Positive politeness, and off record strategy to persuade and get their customer attention.

The utterances that used more than one strategy also found Indonesian and American advertisements. The use of more than one strategy can be caused by interactional balance and the mood of the interactants.

The emphasis on product attributes and persuasive information in American advertising aligns with an individualistic cultural model, where autonomy, personal success, and self-esteem are central values. Here, persuasive discourse shifts from relational engagement to informational and achievement-oriented appeals, reflecting what could be understood as a self-enhancement paradigm.

Conclusion

This discussion highlights the interplay between cultural dimensions and pragmatic communication strategies in advertising discourse. The prevalence of bald-on-record and positive politeness strategies in Indonesian advertising can be interpreted through a collectivist cultural framework, where maintaining social cohesion legitimizes more directive forms of communication when framed as beneficial guidance. These strategies do not necessarily threaten the audience's "face" because they align with shared norms of mutual care and community orientation.

Advertising strategies are not merely stylistic choices but are deeply embedded in cultural expectations about communication, identity, and social relations. This supports cross-cultural

communication theories that argue discourse patterns, including politeness strategies, which are culturally contingent and function to reinforce dominant societal values.

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