



Production of Politeness by Myanmar (Burmese) Native Speakers in Requests

Wai Yan Min Oo ^{1*} 

¹2nd Year PhD Student in Linguistic Sciences/ Intercultural Linguistics, Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary; Assistant Lecturer, Department of English, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, Mandalay, Myanmar

APA Citation:

Oo, W. Y. M. (2023). Production of politeness by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers in requests. *Journal of English Language and Linguistics*, 4(2), 66-84. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

Received: September 2, 2023

Revised: November 30, 2023

Accepted: December 4, 2023

Abstract

This research aimed to examine the production of politeness in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers via the request speech act. The politeness theory of Brown & Levison (1987) was deployed to investigate the responses elicited from the informants. The data consists of a quantitative approach (Discourse completion test). Forty-nine male and female Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers with different ages and educational backgrounds responded to the questionnaire. The findings of this research argued for the adequacy of the theories of Brown & Levison (1987) for the Myanmar (Burmese) context. In addition, a new politeness strategy, "using politeness markers," was suggested. Employments of politeness strategies in making the requests varied depending on the different social variables. Three characteristics of using politeness strategies by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, which can be said as the pragmatic competencies of politeness, are also laid out. The framework of politeness production the request by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers was proposed to fulfill the goal of third-wave politeness research, studying politeness at macro and micro levels.

Keywords: Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, Politeness in Myanmar (Burmese), Request speech Act, Social variability in language use, Third-wave politeness research

Introduction

Politeness is more than a subfield of pragmatics since it heavily relates to the other manifestations of pragmatics. When there is a loophole in pragmatic maxims and theories, politeness is the field that gives the most suitable, relevant, and comprehensive explanations

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: waiyanminoo@student.elte.hu

for those leakages. For example, politeness can explain conversational implicatures and maxims flouting. Lakoff (1973) devised the first politeness theory, which began the prolonged controversial field of politeness. Kadar and Haugh's (2013) framework of understanding politeness is the latest framework regarding the field. During these fifty years, scholars worldwide have participated in shaping politeness restlessly. Ide (1989), Matsumoto (1989), Gu (1990), and Mao (1994) presented their findings on the theory of politeness set by Western scholars.

According to Kadar (2017), theories, research, and ideology of politeness can be divided into three waves. These three waves of politeness research are developed from the criticisms and refurbishments of previous theories. Kadar (2017) claimed the third wave of politeness research that explores politeness beyond the study of its production and evaluation.

The current study can also be said to revisit Brown and Levison's (1987) theory during the third wave in the politeness field. However, this belongs to the tenets of third-wave politeness research (production and evaluation) since it will be focusing on the production of politeness. According to Kadar (2017), the third wave of politeness research works on the knowledge gap or theoretical gap still needs to be answered by the second wave of politeness research. This gap is the endeavor to make politeness models that cover both its production and evaluation. In studying the production of politeness, Brown and Levison's (1987) theory of politeness is the most comprehensive theoretical background as they can provide detailed, accurate, and mathematical answers to how politeness is used. On the other hand, this study does not endorse the claim of the universality of Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory.

Another research niche for doing this study is due to "a state of limbo" left by the second wave of politeness research. Kadar (2017) pointed out that second-wave politeness scholars did not provide a theory that can be an alternative to Brown and Levison's (1987) theory. The third wave politeness research tries to develop a model of politeness for examining the production and evaluation of politeness. This development can be done by adjusting the previous politeness theories. This study aims to test the universality of Brown and Levison (1987) in the Myanmar context. As mentioned before, this is a revisit to Brown and Levison's (1987) theory when no other politeness theory can explain the production of politeness as comprehensively and detailed as Brown and Levison's (1987) theory. Even if the current theory cannot explain the production of politeness at the macro level (discourse) and it has some defaults in explaining politeness in certain cultures, it is workable in micro-level analysis (utterances) in the context of face-threatening acts (e.g., requests). To fulfill the gaps mentioned above, it aims to examine the politeness production in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers via the request speech act. Based on the arguments above and considerations, the research questions are as in the following:

1. Do Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers use strategies that are not mentioned in the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987)?
2. Do the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987) fit into the operation of politeness among Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers?

3. How do the employments of politeness strategies vary depending on the different social variables by Brown and Levison (1987)?

The introduction deals with a brief history of politeness and the justifications for using Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory in this study. It also outlines the aim and research questions of the current study. The literature review section provides detailed facts about the politeness theory by Brown and Levison (1987). The materials and method section presents research tools (Multiple-choice discourse completion test and Discourse completion test) and informants of the study. The section on findings and discussion focuses on three research questions laid out in the introduction section. It also tackles the characteristics of the politeness strategies used in the requests by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. The conclusion section highlights the study's main findings and suggestions for further research.

Literature Review

Based on the concepts of "face" and "face-threatening act," the most comprehensive and analytical theory of politeness was presented by Brown and Levison (1987). The term "face" is divided into two parts: negative face and positive face. The former is described as the desire not to be impeded or put upon and to have freedom as the individual's will. The latter is about the individual's desire to be liked, respected, approved of, and appreciated by others.

Brown and Levison (1987) assumed that specific speech acts could damage or threaten the interlocutors' (speaker or hearer) public images or faces. Generally, there are two types of faces: positive and negative. A positive face can be damaged by insulting the hearer, expressing disapproval of something the hearer possesses, and forcing the speaker's mistakes on the job. A negative face can be damaged by impinging the hearer's freedom to do something or making an offer by the speaker. Those are regarded as "face-threatening acts" (FTAs). With the virtue of mitigating the face threats to the speaker or hearer, politeness strategies are used. Brown and Levison (1987) also presented the possible choice of strategy based on the three variables: power (P), distance (D), and rating of imposition (R).

Regarding the employment of strategies, avoiding the FTAs or doing the FTAs by using the strategy is the initial option for the speaker. If the speaker chooses to do the FTA, there are two options: doing the act directly (on record) or indirectly (off record). The on-record option covers doing FTA with redressive action (positive and negative politeness) or without redressive action (bald on record). The FTAs tracking can be divided into five strategies: 1. Bald on record, 2. Positive politeness strategies, 3. Negative politeness strategies, 4. Off-record strategies, and 5. Do not do FTA.

1. Bald on Record Strategy

Using the bald-on-record technique, the listener can clearly understand the speaker's communication goal (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The speaker employs this strategy because, rather than appeasing the listener's face, he wants to perform the face-threatening act effectively. The statements are made in a direct, lucid, unequivocal, and brief manner. It tries

to get the listener to do something. This strategy is frequently employed when the speaker and the hearer are well acquainted. Therefore, this strategy will surprise, humiliate, and make the listener uneasy. It is also assumed to be a direct strategy.

2. Positive Politeness Strategies

A positive politeness strategy emphasizes the listener's positive face and shows the desire for what he wants or claims himself (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Those strategies are frequently used to reduce the gap between the speaker and the listener and the harm to the addressee's face by softening the interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) listed the positive politeness strategies as 1. Notice, attend to the hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods), 2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer), 3. Intensify interest to the hearer, 4. Use in-group identity markers, 5. Seek agreement, 6. Avoid disagreement, 7. Presuppose/raise/assert common ground, 8. Joke, 9. Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants, 10. Offer, promise, 11. Be optimistic, 12. Include both the speaker and hearer in the activity, 13. Give (or ask for) reasons, 14. Assume or assert reciprocity, and 15. Give gifts to the hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).

3. Negative Politeness Strategies

A negative politeness strategy is positioned to satisfy the addressee's negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that "negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded." In addition, if the speaker wishes an intention to threaten the addressee's face, Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested using strategies to reduce that threat, such as 1. Be direct/conventionally indirect, 2. Question, hedge, 3. Be pessimistic, 4. Minimize the size of imposition on hearer, 5. Give deference, 6. Apologize, 7. Impersonalize S and H; Avoid the pronouns 'I' and 'you', 8. State the FTA as a general rule, 9. Nominalize, and 10. Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebteding hearer.

4. Off Record Strategies

If there are multiple clear goals, the off-record strategy is utilized so that the speaker cannot be assumed to have committed to just one objective (Brown & Levinson 1987). It signifies that the speaker's speech has more than one clear aim or meaning; the hearer must interpret it to grasp its true significance. In this regard, the off-record strategies are as 1. Give hints, 2. Give association clues, 3. Presuppose, 4. Understate, 5. Overstate, 6. Use tautologies, 7. Use contradictions, 8. Be ironic, 9. Use metaphors, 10. Use rhetorical questions, 11. Be ambiguous – metaphor, 12. Be vague, 13. Over generalize, 14. Displace H, and 15. Be incomplete, and use ellipsis

5. Don't Do FTA

Brown and Levinson (1987) do not explain in detail about this strategy. It is about the speaker not saying anything when the utterances are prone to falling into the category of face-threatening.

Research Objective

To examine the production of politeness in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers via the request speech act.

Methodology

1. Tools

The questionnaire for the study is composed of three sections: Section 1 (Demographic information), Section 2 (Discourse completion test), and Section 3 (Multiple choice discourse completion test). The multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) and discourse completion test (DCT) contain eight items, respectively. The researcher develops these two tests by adapting the previous studies' tests in Qari (2017) and Rima (2019). The items in the two tests are adapted to reflect different social variables in the speech situation of each item. According to Brown & Levison (1987), the use of politeness strategies varies depending on the social variables of the speech situation. The social variable has three factors (Social power, social distance, and size of imposition). Different social variables mean the difference among these three factors. In other words, three factors are not always the same (existence or absence) in every speech situation, resulting in eight social variables (See Table 1). For example, in social variable 1, the speaker has more social power than the hearer; there is no social distance between them, and the size of the imposition of the utterance is small. Each item in the survey describes the speech situation in which the respondents have to make their requests or deny other people's requests. The social variables of each item are as follows.

Table 1

Underlying Social Variables in the Items of MCDCT and DCT

No.	Social Variables		
	Power (-= The speaker does not have power over the hearer.) (+=The speaker has more power than the hearer)	Distance (+= no distance) (- =distance)	Ranking of Imposition (+= high, -= low)
1.	+	+	-
2.	+	-	+
3.	+	+	+
4.	+	-	-
5.	-	-	-
6.	-	+	+
7.	-	+	-
8.	-	-	+

Apart from the 16 items mentioned above of MDCT and DCT, the personal information of the respondents, such as the items of ages (six options: 16-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and above 61), gender (three options: male, female, and rather not to say) and the high educational

level (nine options: Having the experience of attending schools, High school completion level, Undergraduate level, Graduate level, Postgraduate student level, Master degree students level, Master degree holder level, Ph.D. students level, and Ph.D. level) are also asked.

These three parts (two tests and personal information) were built in the form of a questionnaire and distributed through Microsoft Office forms and distributed to the respondents electronically via Facebook and Viber applications. The average time to complete the questionnaire is 34 minutes. The survey is in the English language. It is translated into Burmese (Myanmar) language to understand the questionnaire better, and the responses are gathered in the Burmese (Myanmar) language. The brief introduction of the study, researchers' brief information, and targeted participants are also mentioned in the questionnaire. The consent of the researcher, mentioning that the data from the respondents was only used for academic purposes, is also informed.

2. Method

The quantitative method from two data collection methods as multi method approach, namely multiple-choice discourse completion test and discourse completion test, is utilized. The politeness strategies underlined in the responses of the informants were examined through the politeness theories by Brown and Levison (1987) in the Excel software.

2.1 An Example of Analyzing the Response

The responses written by the informants in the questionnaire are dealt with quantitative means by using the content analysis method. The strategies underlined in them are examined with the researcher's justifications using the politeness theories mentioned in the literature review section. The texts relating to politeness strategies are coded. For example, in Table 2, it can be seen that the strategies are coded as PPS-13, etc. To be exact, P means "positive," "PS" means "politeness strategies, the number (e.g., 1, 13, etc.) is their occurrence in theory, and "N" means "negative." The following is an example response (1) to item (6) for analyzing data.

Item (6) in the Questionnaire

Myanmar (Burmese) Version

သင်သည် ဆရာ/ဆရာမ ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ သင်၏ စာသင်ခန်းအတွင်းမှ တပည့်တစ်ဦးအား ကျောက်သင်ပုန်းရှိစာအား ဖျက်ခိုင်းရာတွင် သင်သူ့အား မည်သို့ ပြောမည်နည်း။

English Version

You are a teacher. You want your student to wipe out the whiteboard. How do you tell him?

(1)

တစ် ယော လောက် သင်ပုန်း ဖျက် ပေး ပါ လား က
 က် လေး

one-N CLF PARTICLE blackboard-N wipe PARTICLE POLITENESS could- Q kid-N
 (minimizer) out-V MARKER

Kid, could just one of you wipe out the blackboard?

In this response, NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer) can be traced by the word "လောကံ (lout)", which is the particle in Myanmar (Burmese) language, and it is used as the minimizer here. The use of politeness marker can be seen from the word "ပါ (par)." This new strategy is not encoded here since the politeness marker role is not mentioned in the politeness theory by Brown and Levison (1987). The word "ကလေး (kid)" is coded as PPS-4 (Use in group identity markers). The respondent has to request this item (6), and here in this response, the informant requested by using questions. Thus, it is coded as NPS-2 (Questions/hedge). This extracted example response finds three strategies (NPS-4, PPS-4, and NPS-2). Apart from this, the use of politeness markers, which can be regarded as the politeness strategy used by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, is also investigated. However, it is not mentioned in the theory of Brown and Levison (1987). The strategy counts from both tests are combined within the same social variable items. For example, in the questionnaire, item (14) from the multiple-choice discourse completion test and item (6) from the discourse completion test under the same social variable (the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is no social distance among them and the size of the imposition of the utterance is low). By enlisting the number of strategies used in this way in EXCEL software, the number of strategies use in terms of social variables, the overall number of strategies used, and the number of strategies used per politeness strategy are obtained in this data analysis.

3. The Informants

The research informants are 12 males and 37 females of Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. The questionnaire, including a personal information section, multiple-choice discourse completion test, and discourse completion test, was distributed to 300 people of different backgrounds and ages. Among them, only 49 people responded to the surveys. The rate of response is 16 percent. The questionnaire was distributed online (via Facebook and Viber applications) to the target audience. The educational background and ages of the informants are as in the following (See Table 2 & Table 3).

Table 2
Educational Background of the Informants

Level	Male	Female
High school completion level	1	3
Undergraduate level	4	18
Graduate level	3	-
Master degree students' level	2	15
Master degree holder level	2	1
Total	12	37

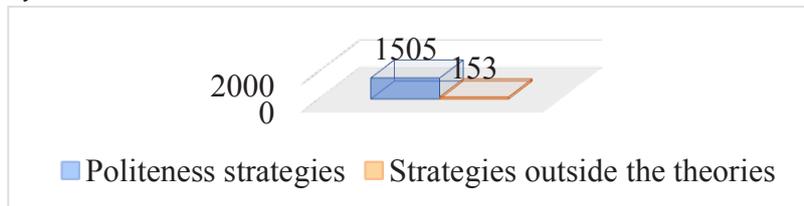
Table 3
Ages of the Informants

Age Interval	Male	Female
16-20	5	19
21-30	4	16
31-40	1	2
41-50	2	-
Total	12	37

Findings and Discussion

The present research paper worked on the politeness strategies in the requests used by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers in Myanmar. The responses given by the informants were examined via politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1986) to elicit the politeness strategies underlined in the responses given by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. The collected data was analyzed via Excel software and interpreted for the three research questions as in the following. To answer the research question (1), "Do Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers use strategies that are not mentioned in the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987)?", all strategies used in the requests are analyzed whether they belong to the present (im) politeness strategies or not.

Figure 1
Comparison of the Use of Politeness Strategies Mentioned and not Mentioned in the Present Politeness Theory



The number of strategies not mentioned in the politeness strategies is to a certain extent in the strategy employment at 153 out of 1658 (See Figure 1). Those include the use of politeness markers (ဗျ (bya), ပါ (par), ရှင့် (shint), etc.) among the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers.

The new strategy used by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers is politeness markers. There is no previous description of using politeness markers as the politeness strategy. In Myanmar (Burmese) language, the absence of a politeness marker is assumed as impolite (Oo, 2023). In this study, the responses given by the informants are attached with politeness markers. Widarwati (2014) states that politeness markers mean "linguistic entities whose presence makes the utterance more polite."

Moreover, Kadar and Haugh (2020) define politeness markers as "a cluster of expressions which are commonly associated with politeness." The use of politeness markers as the strategy for conducting politeness is not mentioned in Brown and Levison (1987), and the lack of them as impoliteness is also not described in Culpeper (2005). Oo (2023) presented that the lack of

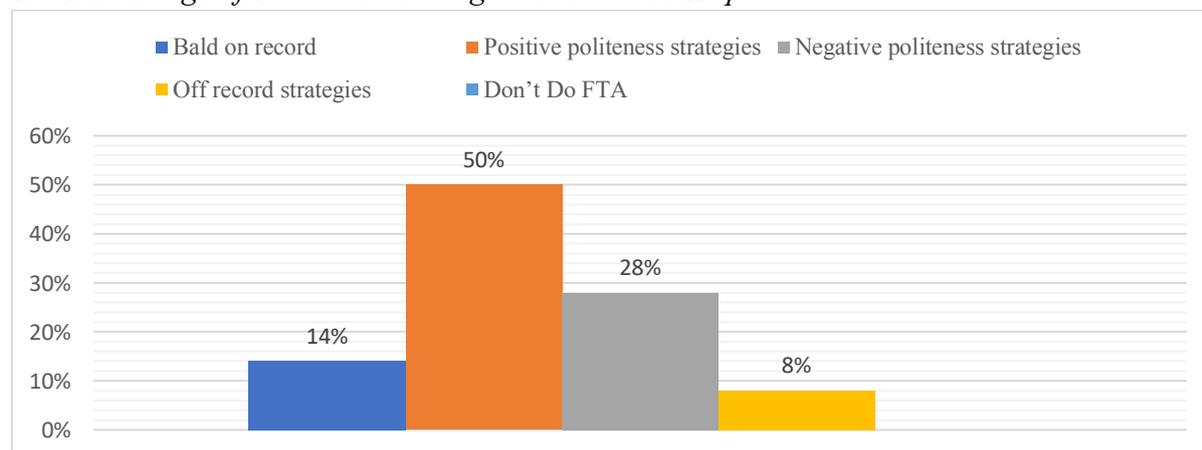
politeness markers means impoliteness in the community of Burmese and Rakhine in Myanmar. The types of politeness markers responded to by the informants are six such as "par (ပါ) (used by both gender), shint (ရှင်) (feminine term), naw (နော်) (used by both gender), bya (ဗျ) (masculine term), khinbyar (ခင်ဗျာ) (masculine term), and please (loanword) (See Table 5). The politeness marker "par (ပါ)" is the most frequent one used in the daily lives of the Burmese community. It is also noted that the difference of occurrences in the politeness markers used by males and females is also linked with the current study population in which the female participants outnumbered male participants.

Table 4
New Strategies Used in the Requests

Overall (S4)	Occurrences
Politeness marker (par/ ပါ)	98
Politeness marker (Shint/ ရှင်)	33
Politeness marker (naw/ နော်)	9
Politeness marker (bya/ ဗျ)	8
Politeness marker (khinbyar/ ခင်ဗျာ)	3
Politeness marker (please)	2

Regarding the research question (2) "Do the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987) fit into the operation of politeness among Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers?", the proportion learns the use of politeness strategies occurrences per super strategies. For example, there are 47 strategies of politeness proposed by Brown and Levison (1987), but they can be regrouped into five super strategies. The most prevalent politeness strategies and the number of politeness strategies that are not employed, although they are in the theories, are investigated.

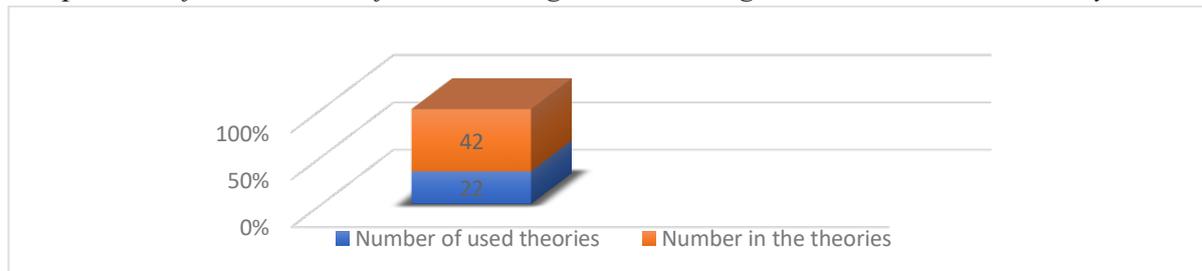
Figure 2
The Percentage of Politeness Strategies Used in the Requests



Half of the politeness strategies used by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers belong to the "positive politeness strategies" category. On the other hand, no employment of the "Don't do FTA" strategy is seen. The use of "negative politeness strategies" is doubled to that of "bald on record."

Figure 3

Comparison of the Number of Used Strategies and Strategies in the Politeness Theory



Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers do not use all the strategies mentioned in the politeness strategies. 22 out of 42 strategies are used in the politeness theory by Brown and Levison (1987).

Table 5

Politeness Strategies found in the Requests

No.	Strategies	Occurrences	Percentage	No.	Strategies	Occurrences	Percentage
1.	PPS-13	301	20	12.	PPS-3	26	2
2.	NPS-2	213	14	13.	NPS-1	13	1
3.	PPS-4	210	14	14.	PPS-2	11	1
4.	Bald on record	199	13	15.	ORS-2	8	1
5.	NPS-4	194	13	16.	NPS-6	5	> 1
6.	PPS-15	88	6	17.	ORS-5	5	> 1
7.	ORS-1	75	5	18.	PPS-14	4	> 1
8.	PPS -1	54	4	19.	PPS-12	3	> 1
9.	ORS-3	34	2	20.	PPS-7	3	> 1
10.	PPS-10	29	2	21.	NPS-9	1	> 1
11.	PPS-9	28	2	22.	PPS-5	1	> 1

The occurrences of politeness strategies are significantly different in number, with the most prevalent one (PPS-13: Give (or ask for) reasons) found to be over 300 times more than the least prevalent one (PPS-5: Seek agreement).

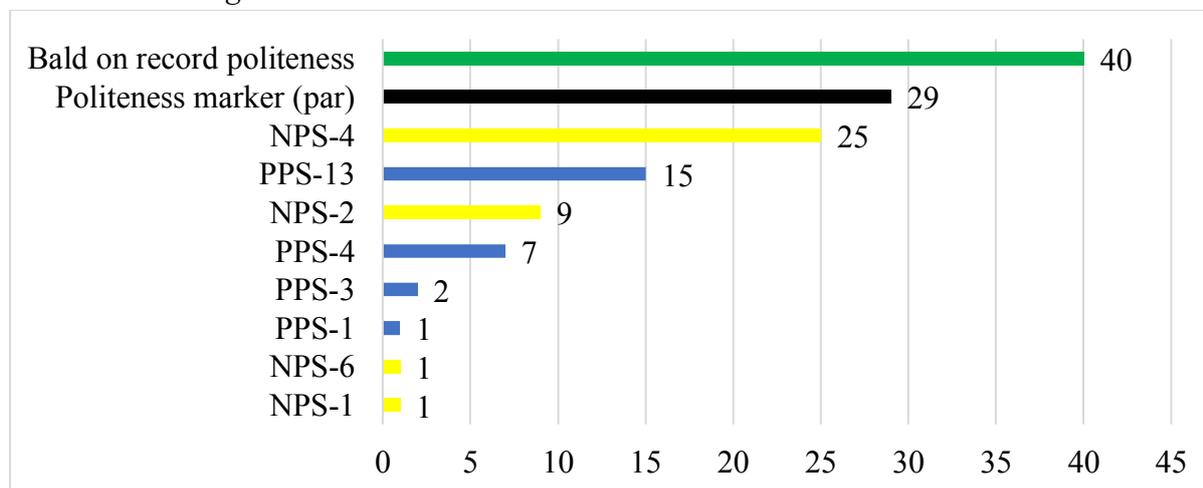
Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers heavily orient to positive politeness strategies (See Figure). This finding aligns with the nature of Burmese people, who are willing to be likened to or approved by others and are not willing to hurt other people's positive faces. On the other hand, the use of "bald on record" contributes to a certain extent in making requests for Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers (See Figure 2). The justifications for using this strategy will be discussed comprehensively in the discussion of research question 3. The uses of politeness

strategies by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers are investigated under all social variables (power, social distance, and rank of imposition). However, not all the strategies proposed in the politeness theories by Brown and Levison (1987) are employed to achieve the speech act of request (See Figure 2 and Table 6).

On the other hand, the strategy of politeness marker should be added to the existing politeness theories. Some unemployed strategies can be excluded to adjust the current politeness theories for the Burmese community. This adjustment can be made by reinforcing the comprehensive and in-depth discussion from the point of Burmese culture. This finding does not mean neither theory matches the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. Upon these findings, it can be deduced that Brown and Levison's (1987) theory of politeness fits into the Burmese community, and the politeness of Burmese people can be expressed through this theory, unlike with the other Asian communities in the previous works of literature (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1989; Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994).

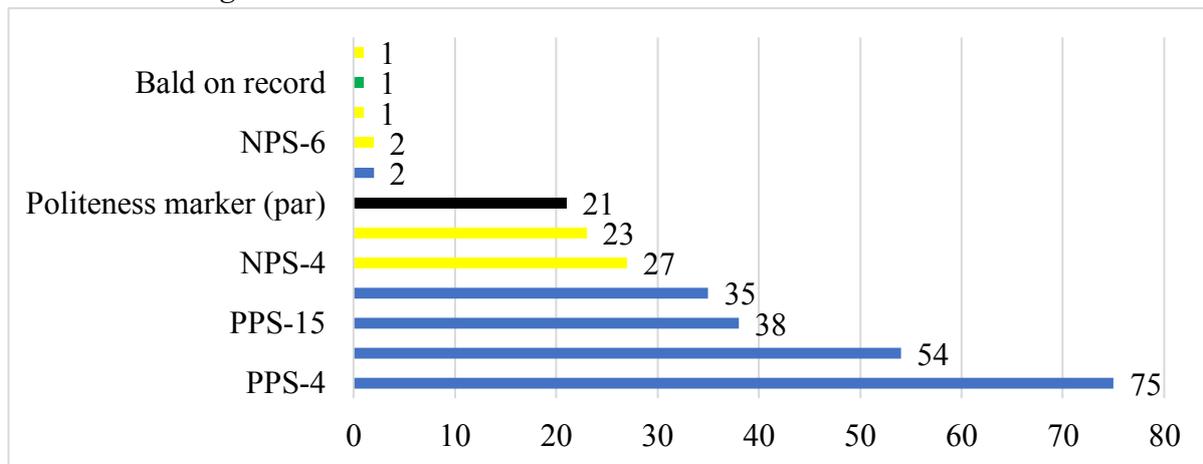
For research question (3), it is investigated that the uses of politeness strategies by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers are variable in terms of the different social variables (1) to (8). Those social variables are distinguished in terms of having the social power of the speaker over the hearer or not, having the social distance between the speaker and the hearer or not, and the high or low size of imposition.

Figure 4
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 1



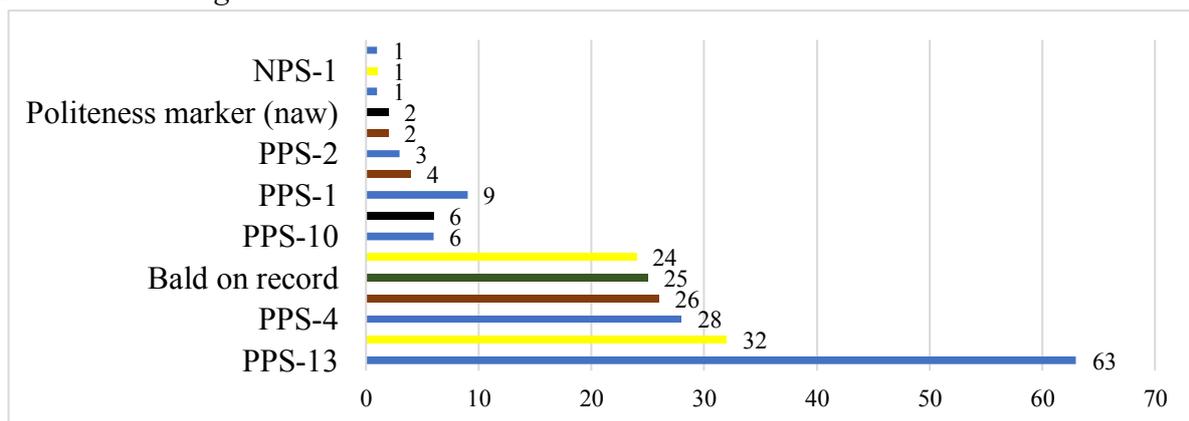
The context of social variable 1 (item 6 and item 14 in the questionnaire) is that the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer, and the size of imposition is low. Using strategies in this social variable reflects the factors of social variables such as social power. “Bald on record politeness”, which is the least polite among the strategies, is the most common. Though positive politeness strategies (PPS-13, PPS-4, PPS-3, and PPS-1) can be seen, their breakdown is lower than the use of negative politeness strategies.

Figure 5
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 2



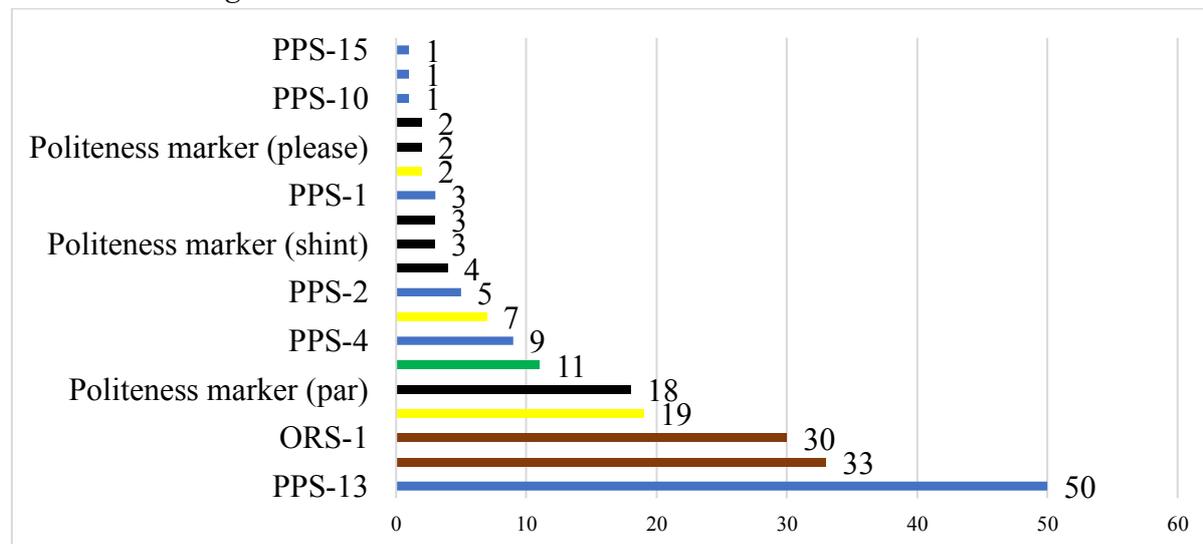
In social variable 2 (item 7 and item 17 in the questionnaire), the speaker has more social power than the hearer (You vs. the friend's son/daughter, and You vs. You as well as the new classmate), there is the social distance among the speakers, and the size of imposition is high. 202 out of 280 occurrences in this social variable are under the category of positive politeness strategies (PPS-4: Use in-group identity markers, PPS-13: Give (or ask for) reasons, PPS-15: Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation), and PPS-1: Notice, attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods)). Negative politeness strategies like NPS-2 (Question, hedge) and NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer) are also used to a certain amount. The politeness marker (par) occurrences are also no less than negative politeness strategies.

Figure 6
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 3



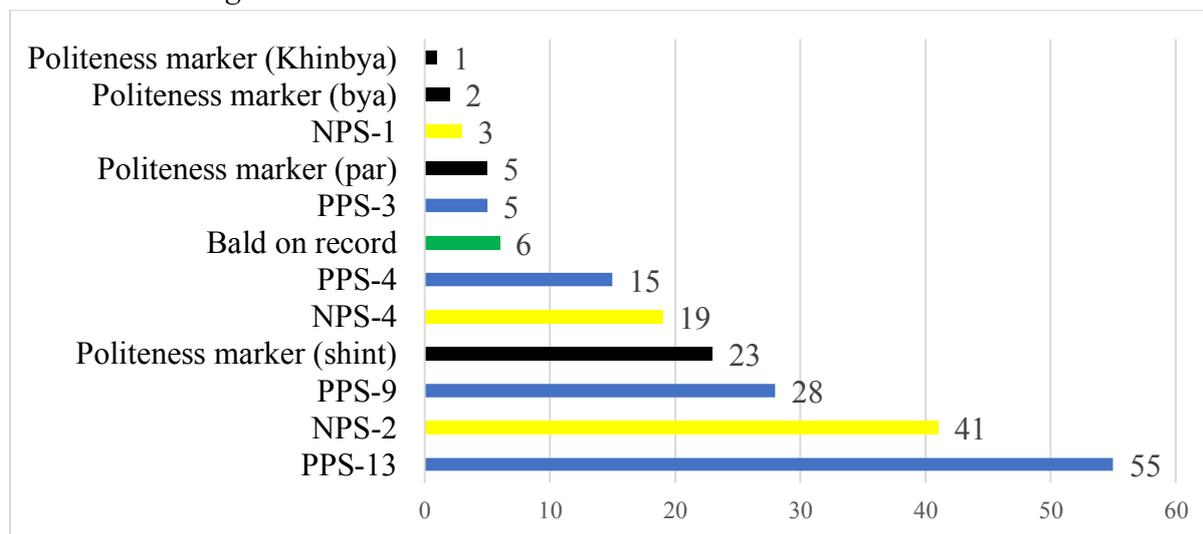
Social variable 3 (item 8 and item 16 in the questionnaire) is the context in which the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is no social distance among them, and the size of imposition is high (Big brother/sister vs. Little brother/sister). Although positive politeness strategies (PPS-13, PPS-4, PPS-10, PPS-1, PPS-2, PPS-14, and PPS-15) have the lion's share in strategy uses with 111 out of 233, the distribution of the strategies is packed with different politeness strategies.

Figure 7
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 4



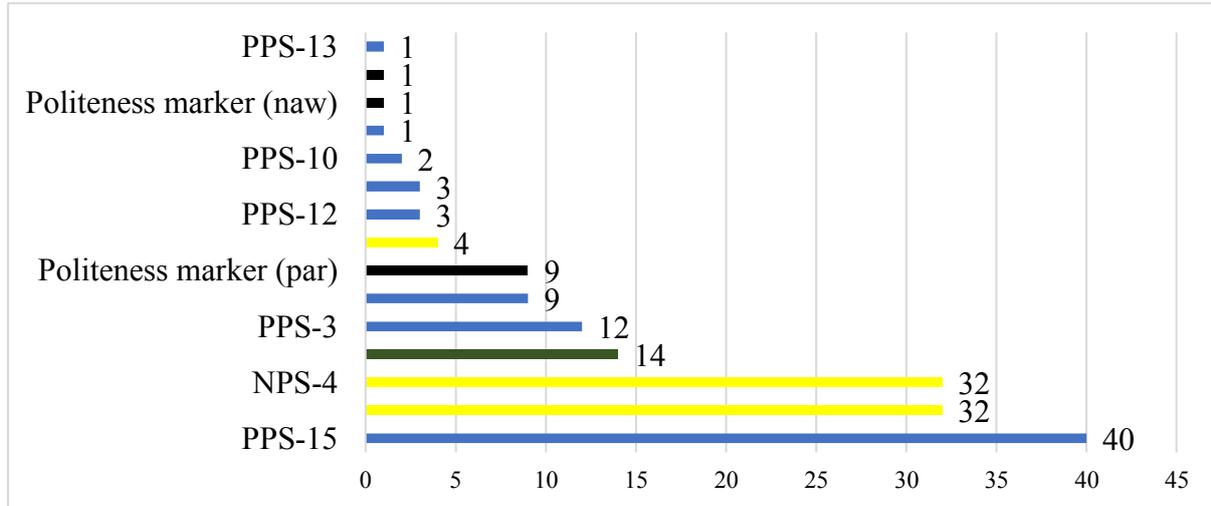
In social variable 4 (item 9 and item 15 in the questionnaire), the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is a social distance among them, and the size of imposition is small (Customer Vs. Delivery service man and You Vs. New Neighbor). The most significant finding is that more off-record strategies are employed in this social variable, and different politeness markers (par, bya, shint, naw, please, and khinbyar) are used. This result is because of the social distance between the speaker and hearer, for example, communication with the new neighbor.

Figure 8
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 5



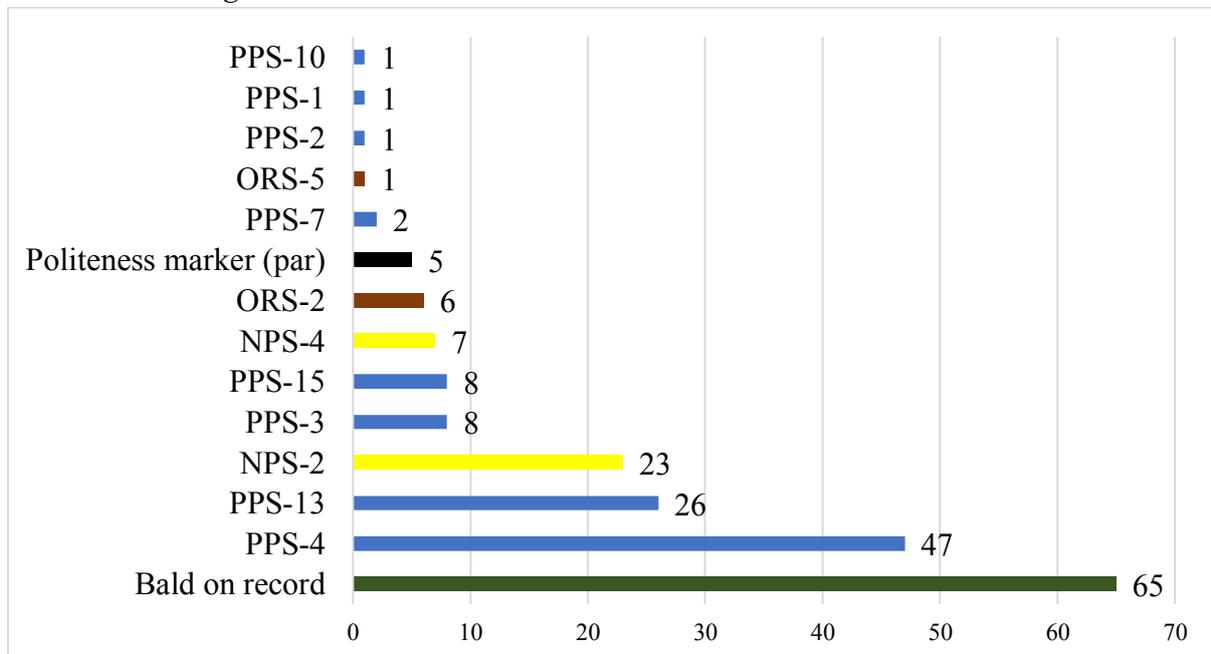
Social variable 5 (item 10 and item 18 in the questionnaire) is the situation (You vs. Stranger older man, and You vs. Stranger) in which the speaker does not have social power over the hearer, there is a social distance among them, and the size of imposition is small. Like the social variable 4, different politeness markers such as shint, par, bya, and khinbya can be seen here. PPS-13 is primarily seen in the employment of strategies. This result may be because the hearers are strangers, and the social role of the hearers needs to be higher. The most prevalent strategies are positive and negative politeness strategies.

Figure 9
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 6



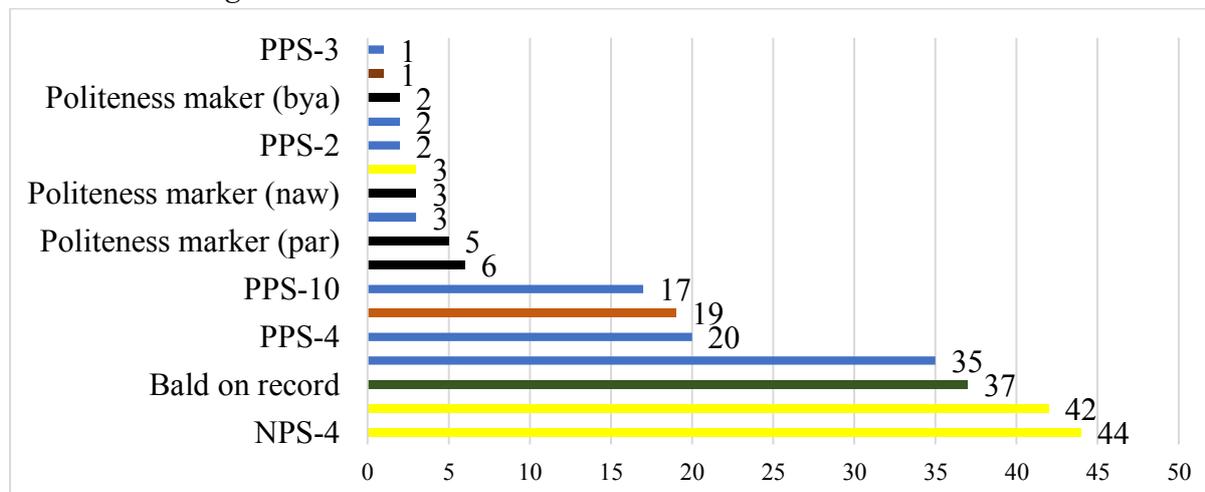
In social variable 6 (item 11 and item 20 in the questionnaire), there is no social power over the hearer by the speaker, no social distance among them, and the size of imposition is high (You Vs. your friend). PPS-15 (Give gifts to the hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)) is the most employed strategy since the size of imposition is high. Surprisingly, the use of positive politeness strategies here is the highest gain in overall strategy use.

Figure 10
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 7



Social variable 7 (item 12 and item 19 in the questionnaire) is when the speaker has no social power over the hearer and no social distance from the hearer, and the size of imposition is small. In such a social variable, it is normal that bald on record is the highest overall strategy employed to make the request.

Figure 11
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 8



The context of social variable 8 (item 13 and item 21 in the questionnaire) is that the speaker has no social power over the hearer, there is a social distance among them, and the size of imposition is high. This social variable is set in two situations: asking for and denying the request. Nearly one in five politeness strategy use is linked to negative politeness strategies. Due to the interlocutors' lack of social power and social distance, different politeness markers such as *bya*, *naw*, *shint*, and *par* are employed.

Thus, based on the findings above and the theories used in this study: politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987) and the three factors of social variables by Brown and Levison (1987), the three characteristics of the politeness strategy used in request by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers can be laid out for the practical implications of politeness in the interaction within Myanmar society.

1. Politeness markers are used less when the size of the imposition of the request is high, regardless of social distance and social power among the interlocutors.
2. Bald on record politeness strategy, along with politeness markers, is used in the requests where the speaker does not have social power over the hearer and the size of the imposition is small.
3. The less use of positive politeness strategies and the use of Bald on record politeness can be seen in the requests in which there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the size of imposition is low.

Since the data in this study has many variables such as ages, educational backgrounds, gender, politeness strategies, and eight different social variables, the present study has distinguished limitations. Firstly, the findings and discussion were presented merely based on politeness strategies and eight social variables. More findings and discussion can be discussed from the point of other different variables such as ages, educational backgrounds, and gender of the respondents. Secondly, there is difficulty in collecting data to get respondents. The response rate is 16 percent. Thirdly, the data from this research is collected from only two means (DCT and MDCT) though it is a multi-method approach. Data can be triangulated to promote the validity of the result. Instead, interviews about how the requests are made by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers should be conducted.

Last but not least, the Gricean-based politeness theory, such as politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987), is vehemently opposed by discursive scholars such as Eelen (2001) and Mills (2003). The politeness research wave is now in its third wave, initiated by scholars like Kadar and Haugh (2013). Researching the first-wave theories is commonly assumed to need be updated. However, there is so much research on politeness these days which works on Brown and Levison (1987) since none of the discursive and third-wave scholars have not developed a comprehensive and meticulous politeness theory like that of Brown and Levison (1987) to study politeness production.

The findings of this research are significant enough to refute the criticisms mentioned above of using Brown and Levison's (1987) theory. The typical criticism of Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory is its preference for Western values, which do not align with Eastern cultures. However, this research shows that Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory is compatible with Burmese culture and can be used to explain Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers' operation of politeness to a great extent. Based on the findings, one thing to be added in their politeness strategies to embed Burmese people's use of politeness is considering politeness markers as another strategy. One more point here is that Brown and Levison (1987) proposed three factors (social power, social distance, and size of imposition) for the social variables of the speech act to describe the strategies used in line with them.

Nevertheless, for the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, the speaker's social role in the community (e.g., being a teacher) is more important than the social power over the hearer. This study mainly focuses on how politeness strategies are used in the different social variables. Three characteristics of the politeness strategy used in requesting by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers are proposed in this study. These characteristics are regarded as pragmatic competencies in the Burmese community.

Regarding the theoretical implications of politeness, Kadar (2017) pointed out the critical knowledge gap and the attempts to create models that capture practices of the production and evaluation of politeness. The present research explores the practices of producing politeness. It fulfills the literature of politeness from the point of a Southeast Asian community by supporting scholars and research works on politeness, creating the tentative politeness model covering both aspects of production and evaluation. Here, it is emphasized that the employment of Brown and Levison (1987) as the theoretical background for the third-wave politeness research is still workable and is not traced back to the first-wave research. In studying the production of politeness, this theory is the most comprehensive, mathematical, and meticulous and could provide solid and proven findings for producing politeness. However, it has some flaws criticized by second-wave politeness scholars.

Recommendations

The Tentative Framework of Politeness Production in the Requests by Myanmar (Burmese) Native Speakers

To formulate the tentative framework for politeness production in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, the most prevalent findings on politeness strategies used in this study, and the

conceptualizations of politeness of Myanmar (Burmese) speakers in making requests by Oo (2023) are used. According to Oo (2023), making requests, using politeness markers and minimizers, thinking about others, and choosing words depending on the hearers are polite. On the other hand, using an "imperative" form, an unpleasant tone, and making a mere request are impolite.

Although Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory can explain the politeness production of Burmese, three of their theoretical assumptions relating to politeness in the request are somewhat different from what was found in this study and previous literature about Burmese's politeness. Firstly, Brown and Levison (1987) classified "Bald on record" as part of the politeness theory. However, Oo (2023) pointed out that the use of the "imperative" form, which is "Bald on record", is impolite. In this study, Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers use the "Bald on record" strategy and politeness markers to mitigate the impoliteness sense in the requests.

Secondly, the face-threatening act of "request" is related to negative politeness (Brown & Levison 1987; Leech 2014). In this study, the request is mainly connected to positive politeness, damaging the addressee's positive face (Figures 2 & 3). The respondents mainly use positive politeness strategies to make and deny requests.

Lastly, Brown & Levison's (1987) mentioned that off-record strategies are for large requests, and on-record strategies are for small requests. This study refutes this point since the data describes on-record strategies that are used for both large and small requests. Off-record strategies are mostly found only for the request in the social variable 4; the size of imposition is small (Figure 7). In addition, the social variables (2,3,6, and 8) have a large size of imposition in the requests. The occurrences of off-record strategies are absent in the social variables 2 and 6, and a few in 3 and 8. This finding is against what Brown & Levison (1987) mentioned above. Based on these facts, the framework of politeness production in the request made by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers is developed as follows.

Table 7

Tentative Framework of Politeness Production in the Requests by Myanmar (Burmese) Native Speakers

1. Politeness marker
2. Positive politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987)
3. Full-fledged request (by using one or more of the following strategies)
• PPS-13 (Give (or ask for) reasons)
• NPS-2 (Question, hedge)
• PPS-4 (Use in-group identity markers)
• NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer)
4. Social Role and three factors of social variables by Brown and Levison (1987)

In terms of politeness production, the first point is about politeness markers. The politeness production analysis in the current study and Oo's (2023) study on politeness conceptualization with theoretical/folk-theoretical conceptualizations (second order) by Kadar & Haugh (2013) indicate that the use of politeness marker as the practice of politeness and its absences show impoliteness.

The second point is the use of positive politeness strategies. The findings show that half of the strategy used is related to this type of strategy in the request (Figure 2). Unlike the traditional assumptions of the connection between the request and the negative face, the positive face can be damaged in making and denying requests in the Burmese context. The third point is about full-fledged requests. Oo (2023) mentioned that "a mere request" is assumed as impoliteness for the Burmese people. In order to avoid "a mere request," using the most prevalent strategies found in this study can help the speakers be polite. The occurrence of five politeness strategies (PPS-13 (Give (or ask for) reasons), NPS-2 (Question, hedge), PPS-4 (Use in-group identity markers), NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer) and Bald on record is 74% (Table 6). Though "Bald on record" is one of the most common strategies used for politeness, this is regarded as "impoliteness" by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers (Oo, 2023).

In the Burmese context, politeness production also depends on "social role," the last point, apart from three social factors (social distance, social power, and size of imposition). Based on the social role, politeness can occur even when it is unnecessary.

Conclusion

The study examines how Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers in Myanmar operate politeness in their community through the speech act of the request and formulate the framework of politeness production in the request by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. Politeness production is studied using the politeness theory of Brown & Levison (1987). This research is in the trend of the third wave politeness trying to provide the data for the practices of the production of politeness to create the model. Relating to the politeness production of Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, a native tribe in the Southeast Asian region, the main findings provide information about different politeness strategies used in terms of the social variables, a new proposed politeness strategy, and theoretical suggestions for the theories for Brown & Levison (1987). It is also affirmed that Brown & Levison's (1987) politeness theory is compatible with the Burmese culture, unlike the previous studies on some Asian communities. As for further studies, to reinforce the aim of the third-wave politeness research: creating the politeness model, the production of politeness should be studied in different cultures and different ethnic tribes as their roles are vital in the field of politeness to identify universal and cultural distinctive components of politeness.

References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.

- Culpeper, J. (2005). Impoliteness and entertainment in the television quiz show: The weakest link. *Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behaviour, Culture, 1*, 35-72.
- Eelen, G. (2001). *A critique of politeness theory* (Vol.1) (1 edition). Routledge.
- Gartner, U. (2005). Is the Myanmar language really tenseless? In J. Watkins (Ed.), *Studies in Burmese linguistics* (pp. 119). Pacific Linguistics.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (pp. 59-82). Academic Press.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics, 3*, 237–257.
- Ide, S. (1989). Formal forms and discernment: two neglected aspects of universals of linguistic politeness. *Multilingual, 8*(2/3), 223-248.
- Kadar, D. Z. (2017, March 29). *Politeness in pragmatics*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia.
- Kadar, D. Z., & Haugh, M. (2013). *Understanding politeness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kadar, D. Z., & House, J. (2020). Politeness Markers revisited - A contrastive pragmatic perspective. *Journal of Politeness Research, 1*-31.
- Lakoff, R. T. (1973). The logic of politeness, or minding your P's or Q's'. In *The ninth regional meeting of the Chicago linguistic society* (pp. 292-305). Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Leech, G. N. (2014). *The pragmatics of politeness*. Oxford University Press.
- Mao, L. M. (1994). Beyond politeness theory: Face revisited and renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics, 21*, 451–486.
- Matsumoto, Y. (1988). Re-examination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japan. *Journal of Pragmatics, 12*, 403-426.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and politeness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Myanmar-English dictionary. (1996). *Myanmar language commission*.
- Oo, W. Y. M. (2023, April. 27). *Conceptualization of the politeness and impoliteness of Burmese and Rakhine races in Myanmar* [Manuscript accepted to be delivered in the conference]. Culture and Cognition in Language 3, Poland.
- Qari, I. A. (2017). *Politeness study of requests and apologies as produced by Saudi Hijazi, EFL learners, and British English university students*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Roehampton.
- Rima, A. (2019). *A study about the used politeness strategies in refusal speech acts in relation to gender as an influential factor the case of third-year students of English at MKU of Biskr* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Longman.
- Vittrant, A. (2005). Burmese as a modality-prominent language. In J. Watkins (Ed.), *Studies in Burmese linguistics* (pp. 147). Pacific Linguistics.
- Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Watts, R. J. (2005). Linguistics politeness research: Quo Vadis? In K. Ehlich and S. Ide (Eds.), *Politeness in language: Studies in its history, theory and practice*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Widarwati, N. T. (2014). Politeness strategies and linguistic politeness markers of imperative in *The Very Best of Donald Duck Comic Series* and their translation in Indonesian. *UNS Journal of Language Studies, 3*(1), 45-55.