



# The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Harold Pinter's "The Birthday Party" in terms of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Biook Behnam (Corresponding author)

Department of English, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

E-mail: behnam\_biook@yahoo.com

Sepideh Raffei Sakhaei

Department of English, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

E-mail: rafieisakhaei.sepideh@gmail.com

Nesa Nabifar

Department of English, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

E-mail: nesanabifar12@yahoo.com

Received: 15-02-2014

Accepted: 16-03-2014

Published: 01-07-2014

doi:10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.4p.80

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.4p.80>

## Abstract

This paper reports a comprehensive study of the politeness phenomenon in Pinter's well-known play, "The Birthday party". It aims at figuring out how politeness strategies are used by the characters and how the variables of power and distance influence the choice of politeness levels. In order to analyze the play's text Brown and Levinson's (1987) universal model of politeness was used. The model is characterized by three variables which are power, distance and rank extremity. Careful screening of the dialogues demonstrates that a good many of politeness strategies were used in the drama. However, different preferences were found in the use of the strategies towards the positive pole. Regarding the social distance the findings are consistent with Brown and Levinson's theory predictions. The findings of this study suggest that the assertion of power is a complicated process which can not merely be explained by the high frequency of the use of certain strategies and an interlocutor's power depends upon many factors like the role of the interlocutor and his/her status in the particular interaction, and in relation to the addressee.

**Keywords:** Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, Distance, Face work, Politeness strategies, Power, "The Birthday party" play

## 1. Introduction

Politeness is not an inborn attribute but is gained through the socialization process. Politeness in this sense is not a "natural" phenomenon which existed before mankind but one which has been socioculturally and historically constructed (Reiter, 2000). "People tend to be considerate because this repays them with a pleasant feeling of satisfaction. It is a multiple reward. You give and take and thus participate in maintaining the necessary equilibrium of relationships" (Sifianou, 1992, p. 83). Linguistically, politeness can be defined as the interactional balance achieved between the need for clarity and the need to avoid interactional imposition.

If an individual wants to learn a language, he must, in addition to grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, learn the rules of speaking (Wolfson, 1983). These rules are shared by speakers of the language and govern their spoken behavior.

As a result, in recent years attention was diverted from linguistic competence to communicative competence which includes concepts of appropriateness and acceptability. One of the important components of communicative competence into which a lot of research has been done is the rules of politeness.

To be a successful language user, then, a speaker must possess knowledge regarding face management strategies. The specific manifestation of these strategies is captured quite clearly in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, first published in 1978, reissued in 1987, generates a wealth of conceptual and empirical researches (Abdesslem, 2001; Brown & Gilman, 1989; Cherry, 1988; Kopyto, 1995; Pearson, 1988; Skewis, 2003; Thomas, 1985). According to Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) politeness is defined as the speaker's attempts to manage the potentially disruptive nature of speech acts with the intent to save the face of others. In their work they attempt to relate the following aspects: face, facework and acts that threaten face (FTAs), sociological variables influencing face threat and five general ways or "superstrategies" of counterbalancing face threat with at least some linguistic strategies (Andersen & Aijmer, 2012).

Brown and Levinson take the participants in discourse as a Model Person (MP) who is endowed with properties of rationality and "face", the public self-image that everyone wants to claim for himself, consisting of two aspects (Reiter, 2000):

(a) Negative face: the want of every “competent adult member” that his actions be unimpeded by others.

(b) Positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

FTAs are any act, verbal or non-verbal, which threatens the way in which an individual sees her/himself or would like to be seen by others (Watts, 2003). Since it is of mutual interest to save each other’s face, FTAs are either avoided (if possible) or different strategies are employed to counteract or soften the FTA; these strategies are presented in the form of five superstrategies for performing FTAs. Brown and Levinson refer to the five strategies, bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record and without the face threatening acts, as “super-strategies”. As it is illustrated in figure 1, the risk of the loss of “face” increases as one moves up the scale from 1 to 5; the greater the risk the more polite the strategy employed.

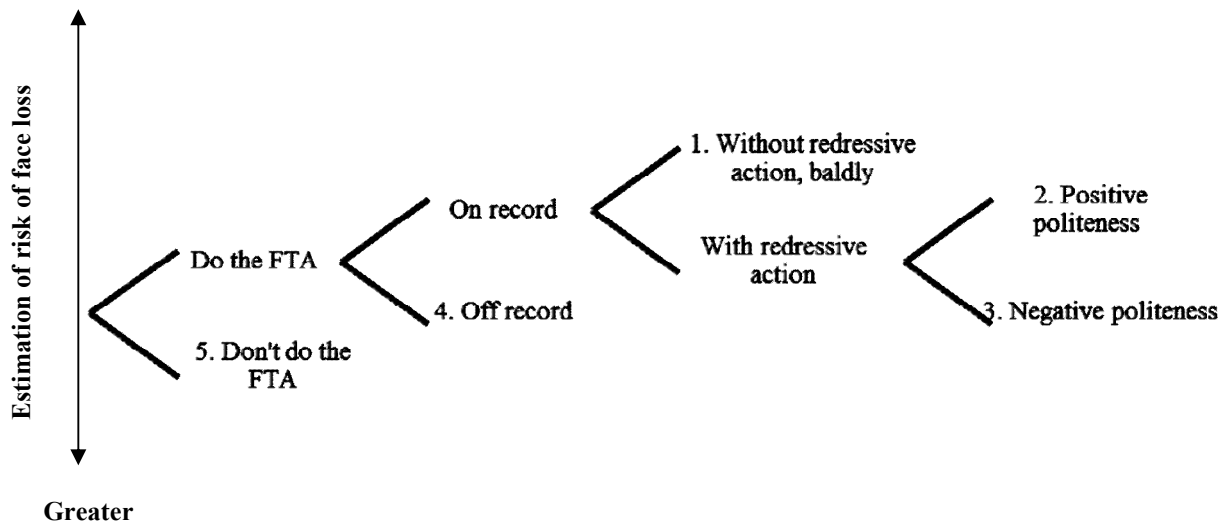


Figure 1. Strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69)

First, the speaker has to decide whether to do or not to do the FTA; if he decides to do it, then he must decide to do it either on record or off record (e.g., by using irony, understatement, rhetorical questions). If the decision is to go on record, the speaker must perform the act with or without redressive action (e.g., “turn off the light, please” versus “turn off the light”). Finally, if the speaker chooses to perform a FTA with redressive action, he/she must do it using positive or negative politeness strategies (e.g., “Nicky, honey, turn off the light” versus “Could you please turn off the light?”). Overall, Brown and Levinson view linguistic politeness as a means of conflict avoidance (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008).

The superstrategies are employed according to the degree of face threat involved in an act and the assessment of the amount of face threat depends on three factors: relative *power* of the speaker, social *distance* (between the interlocutors), and *rank* (degree of imposition).

The main building blocks in Brown and Levinson’s theory are Goffman’s (1967) seminal study of “face” and Grice’s (1975) logic of conversation (Reiter, 2000). Grice (1975) puts forward the cooperative principle (CP), on which many scholars base their own writings, and thereupon the politeness study is inspired to spring up (Wanli & Aihong, 2008). Lakoff (1973) was among the first researchers to adopt Grice’s framework in an attempt to explain a model of politeness from a pragmatic perspective (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008). She interprets politeness as those forms of behavior which have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction (Watts, Ide, & Ehlich, 2005). Lakoff (1973, 1977) suggests two rules of Pragmatic Competence; the Rules of Clarity and the Rules of Politeness. Leech (1983) also recognizes that politeness is an important missing link between the Cooperative Principle and the problem of how to relate sense to force (Ogiermann, 2009). Gu’s theory (1990), which is a revised form of Leech’s theory in the Chinese context explicitly connects politeness with societal norms.

The present paper is an account of politeness phenomenon by way of examining how politeness is employed by the characters of Harold Pinter’s “The Birthday Party” to redress the performance of the face threatening acts in the light of Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) concept of politeness which expects to find the expressions of politeness in the selected dialogues of the characters with regard to their social power and distance.

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model offers a tool to describe the quality of social relationships; thus, it can serve as a discourse framework in the analysis of literary dialogue. This theory attracted much attention and was applied by numerous linguists to the analysis of different literary texts such as poetic works and prose but, when it comes to the analysis of drama there are still inadequacies since the focus of most of previous works was on word choice and sentence structure.

This study, therefore, aims to determine whether the claims made by the model would hold true if the play is analyzed concerning the politeness strategies employed by the characters and whether Brown and Levinson’s analysis about the effect of power and social distance between speakers and hearers on the use of politeness strategies is adequate or not.

The enquiry behind this issue is formulated in the following research questions:

1. What type of politeness strategies are employed by the characters of Harold Pinter's "The birthday party"?
2. How do the social variables of power and distance influence usage of politeness strategies by the characters of Harold Pinter's "The birthday party"?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Data

As in the investigation of politeness phenomenon plays provide reliable data in natural social situations and the character to character level of interaction can be subjected to the same analytic procedures as naturally-occurring conversation, the data source for this investigation was Nobel-prize winning playwright Harold Pinter's "The Birthday Party"; which is the first full-length play by Harold Pinter and one of Pinter's best-known and most-frequently performed plays.

### 2.2 Instruments

Brown and Levinson's categories for politeness strategies constitute the framework of the present study since it is the best known and most comprehensive model in the field of politeness research which is applied by numerous researchers.

### 2.3 Procedure

In order to figure out the uses of politeness strategies in the drama, the researchers followed the four steps below:

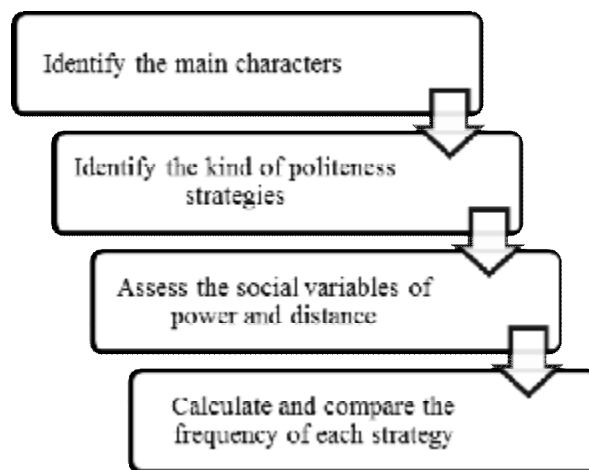


Figure 2. Steps for identifying politeness strategies used in "The Birthday Party" play

In order to demonstrate the way dialogues of the play were examined an example is given here:

- **Petey** Why don't you have a walk down to the shops? **Positive politeness (ask for reasons)** It's fresh out. It'll clear your head.

**Meg** Will it? **Positive politeness (seeking agreement)**

**Petey** Bound to **Positive politeness (avoid disagreement)**

#### 2.3.1 Steps for Checking the Effect of Social Distance on the Use of Politeness Strategies

The three steps of figure 3 were taken to examine the effect of social distance on the use of politeness strategies.

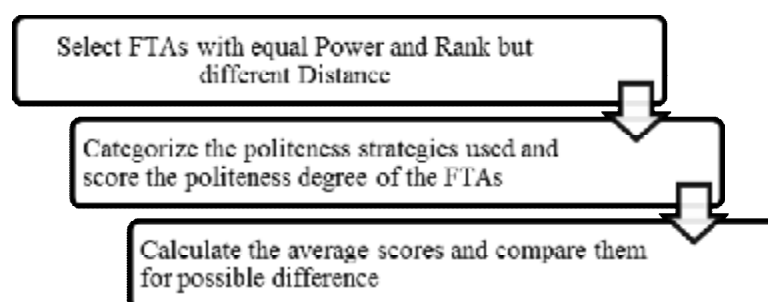


Figure 3. Steps for Checking the Effect of Social Distance on the Use of Politeness Strategies

### 2.3.2 Steps for Checking the Effect of Power on the Use of Politeness Strategies

From Brown and Levinson's model, one can infer that, other things being equal, the greater the speaker's power over the hearer, the less need there is for politeness.

In this study, in order to investigate how Harold Pinter depicted a character's power through his/her use of politeness strategies the frequency of occurrence of politeness strategies in the form of six distinct interactions between the main characters of the play was manually calculated and compared.

### 2.4 Design of the Study

This was a type of content analysis research which was conducted to apply Brown and Levinson's politeness model on "The Birthday Party" drama.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

Due to the complex and social nature of politeness phenomenon and with regard to the type of data in this study qualitative methods of analysis were used as the major way of evaluation. In addition, quantitative approach was also used for calculating frequency counts and facilitating comparison of the findings. After identification of the sort of strategies, the frequency of occurrence of these strategies was manually calculated and compared for all participants in the play.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 The Politeness Strategies in "The Birthday Party" Drama

Table 1 and Figure 4 display the general information on the use of Brown and Levinson's (1987) four super strategies in "The Birthday Party" drama.

Table 1. The total frequency of politeness strategies used in "The Birthday Party" drama

Strategies	Positive Politeness	Negative politeness	Bald on Record	on Off Record	Total
Frequency	377	82	105	82	646
Frequency (%)	58.35%	12.7%	16.25%	12.7%	100

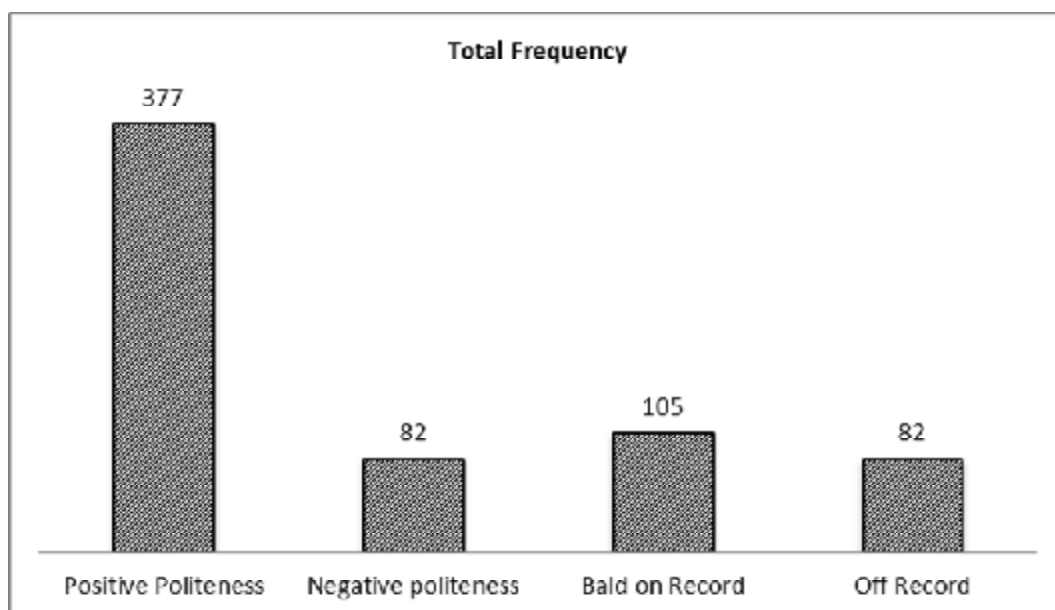


Figure 4. The total frequency of politeness strategies used in "The Birthday Party" drama

The data in Table 1 and Figure 4 indicate that all the four super-strategies of politeness are used in the drama; however, there are differences in characters' preference in the use of different politeness strategies. When performing the FTAs characters had a clear preference for the use of positive politeness, with the frequency of positive politeness strategies being as high as 58.35% while that of bald on record strategies is only 16.25% of the total.

In addition, the off-record and negative politeness strategies are equally used with a frequency of 12.7% of the total strategies.

### 3.2 The Use of Four Super Strategies by Each Character in "The Birthday Party" Drama

The careful analysis of the dialogues revealed that regarding the use of super-strategies of politeness each character depending on the conversational situation employs different strategies. These differences are clearly illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 5.

Table 2. The frequency of each super-strategy used by each character

		Strategies			
		Positive Politeness	Negative politeness	Bald on Record	Off Record
Characters	Meg	118	14	15	8
	Petey	54	4	3	5
	Stanley	50	26	17	31
	Goldberg	97	19	48	29
	McCann	38	13	16	7
	Lulu	20	6	6	2

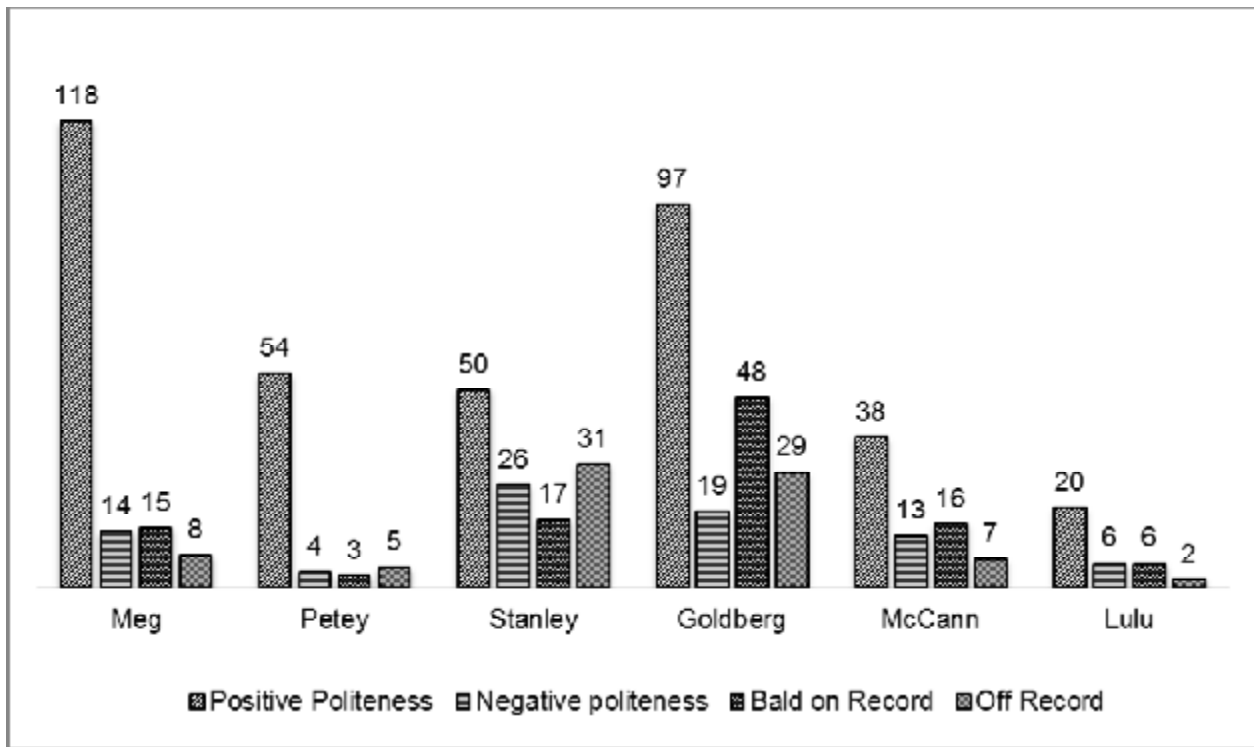


Figure 5. The frequency of each super-strategy used by each character

From the data in Table 2 and Figure 5 we can find that a variety of super-strategies are used by different characters of the drama. This indicates that Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies are at work in this drama.

### 3.3 Comparison of the Politeness Strategies Used by the Main Characters of “The Birthday Party” Drama in Paired Relations

In order to have an in depth study of the politeness strategies it was aimed at analyzing the speeches involving the same two characters and comparing the frequency of the use of these strategies in the form of paired relations. Table 3 shows the data about these comparisons.

Table 3. The frequency of politeness strategies in “The Birthday Party” drama in paired relations

Characters (A)	Characters (B)	Frequency of Politeness Strategies	
		A in relation to B	B in relation to A
Meg	Petey	67	40
Meg	Stanley	52	48
Meg	Goldberg	27	48
Goldberg	McCann	50	31
Goldberg	Stanley	45	25
Stanley	McCann	43	33

Regarding the dialogues of the characters in the play there are six distinct interactions including: 1.Meg and Petey, 2.Meg and Stanley, 3.Meg and Goldberg, 4.Goldberg and McCann, 5.Goldberg and Stanley and, 6. Stanley and McCann.

In Meg-Petey interaction, it is realized that as Meg and Petey are husband and wife there is not a great difference regarding their relative power over each other but as we proceed reading the play we can see that Meg has a type of personality that makes her husband to be more powerful in comparison with her. We can also infer that the couple is so familiar with each other that there is very low or almost no distance between them. From the data in Table 3 it is

realized that through the dialogue exchanges between these two characters, Meg uses 67 times of politeness strategies while Petey uses only 40 times of these strategies.

In Meg-Stanley interaction, the social distance is very low because Staley is living in Meg and Petey's house for a long time and they know each other very well so the frequency of interaction between them is high. Regarding the power element it is implied that although Stanley is the tenant and Meg is the landlady, Meg lets Stanley to stay in higher position than her in an attempt to make him feel satisfied and not think of leaving that home since she has a kind of mother sense towards him. In their interaction Meg uses 52 times of politeness strategies and Stanley uses 48 times of them.

In Meg-Goldberg interaction, as Goldberg is a newcomer to Meg's house, they are recently introduced to each other and the frequency of interaction between them is very low thus the social distance between them is high. Although it is expected that Meg as the hostess should stand in a higher position than Goldberg, the story of the play implies that Goldberg is not such a simple guest but an agent who comes to that house for carrying out a mission to capture Staley with the trace of threat evident in all of his dialogues hence, regarding the power element Goldberg is more powerful than Meg. Dialogue exchanges between them show that Meg uses 27 times of politeness strategies and Goldberg uses 48 times of these strategies.

In Goldberg-McCann interaction, they are cooperating with each other for years and as they form a team that has the common goal of arresting Stanley and taking him away from boarding house, the frequency of interaction between them is high and they know each other very well thus, distance between these two characters is very low. In their team Goldberg is the mastermind and McCann is the follower who runs Goldberg's commands; in consequence Goldberg is more powerful than McCann. The analysis of dialogues between these two characters shows that Goldberg uses 50 times of politeness strategies while, McCann uses 31 times of them.

In Goldberg-Stanley interaction, Goldberg is referred as a stranger who at first enters the boarding house as a visitor that Stanley and the householders knew nothing about him so, the frequency of interaction between them is very low and the distance is very high. As the story proceeds, we understand that Goldberg and his attendant McCann have not chosen to go to that house by chance but they were planning to implement the project of arresting Stanley and in order to accomplish their goal they threaten everyone specially Stanley himself. The relationship between Stanley and Goldberg which is always along with a kind of threat from the part of Goldberg shows that Goldberg is standing in a higher position than Stanley and he is more powerful than him. Dialogue exchanges between them reveal that Goldberg employs 45 times of politeness strategies and Stanley uses 25 times of them.

In Stanley-McCann interaction, like Goldberg, McCann is just introduced as a stranger who comes to have a rest in the boarding house where Stanley is living for a long time so, at first they did not know each other and the frequency of interaction is very low and the distance between them is very high. Regarding the power element, as already explained, McCann is accompanying Goldberg to take Stanley away and this issue makes him more powerful than Stanley. In their interaction Stanley uses 43 times of politeness strategies and McCann uses 33 times of them.

### 3.4 The Effect of Social Distance on the Use of Politeness Strategies

In order to examine the effect of social distance (D) on the use of politeness strategies, the present researchers aimed to select FTAs of the same ranking of imposition (R) involving two pairs of characters in the drama.

Accordingly, the FTAs of the same ranking of imposition performed by Meg to her husband Petey and to Goldberg and the FTAs performed by Goldberg to his colleague McCann and to Stanley were chosen. In both cases, R and P were the same. However, the social distance in these two cases was different. And then, the researchers calculated the average politeness scores with regard to different social distance value.

Table 4. The politeness scores in two pairs of characters in the "The Birthday Party" drama with regard to social distance (D)

		Two pairs of characters	
		First pair	Second pair
<b>Politeness scores</b>	<b>Politeness scores in BD</b>	8.00 per FTA	4.50 per FTA
	<b>Politeness scores in SD</b>	1.22 per FTA	2.33 per FTA

- First pair refers to Meg to (Petey and Goldberg)
- Second pair refers to Goldberg to (McCann and Stanley)
- BD refers to "big distance"
- SD refers to "small distance"

Table 4 indicates that social distance (D) does function as an important variable bearing influence on the use of politeness strategies. As can be seen in the above table, the average politeness score for every FTA in the case of big social distance is 8.00 in the first pair of characters while, the average score for every FTA in the case of small social distance is only 1.22; similarly, in the second pair the average politeness score for each FTA in the case of big social distance is 4.50 while, that score in the case of small social distance is only 2.33. Therefore, from the data, we can find

that in both cases, the relation between social distance (D) and the use of politeness strategies can be stated as follows: when performing an FTA, the bigger the social distance between speaker and hearer is, the more polite the speaker chooses to be; the smaller the social distance between speaker and hearer is, the less polite the speaker tends to be. This finding is consistent with that predicted by Brown and Levinson (1987).

### 3.5 The Effect of Power on the Use of Politeness Strategies

In this study the effect of power on the use of politeness strategies is examined through the comparison of the frequency of the use of these strategies in the form of six interactions between the main characters of the play.

The result of the analysis suggests that the assertion of effect of power element is a very complicated process which can not merely be explained by the high frequency of use of certain strategies. For example, in interaction between Meg and Petey or that between Meg and Stanley where in both cases distance between characters is perceived to be low the powerful character uses lower number of politeness strategies than his/her partner. In Meg-Petey relation Meg uses 67 times of politeness strategies while they are only used 40 times by Petey as the powerful character or in Meg-Stanley interaction, Meg employs 52 times of these strategies while Stanley as the powerful character uses 48 times of them. But, there is controversy in Goldberg-McCann interaction where although like the two previous interactions the distance between these two characters is low, the powerful character namely, Goldberg uses higher number of politeness strategies with the frequency of 50 times than McCann who only uses 31 times of them. The same is true about the next three main interactions of the play where distance between the characters is perceived to be high. For instance, in Stanley-McCann relation, McCann as the powerful character uses lower number of politeness strategies with the frequency of 33 times while Stanley uses 43 times of them. But, in Meg- Goldberg and in Goldberg-Stanley interactions the condition is different; in Meg- Goldberg relation, Goldberg as the powerful character uses higher number of politeness strategies with the frequency of 48 times while Meg only uses 27 times of them. Also, in Goldberg- Stanley interaction Goldberg as the powerful character uses higher number of these strategies with the frequency of 45 times while Stanley only uses 25 times of them.

These findings show that an interlocutor's power besides the sum of strategies used is dependent upon many factors, such as, for example, the role of the participants in the interaction, their social status and the ensuing rights and obligations holding between them. Also important is the response he/she receives from the addressee and other participants in the interaction.

## 4. Discussion of the Findings

The present study has yielded the following findings:

1. In the "The Birthday Party" drama, the people used a large number of politeness strategies to perform the FTAs politely. However, different people had different preferences in the use of politeness strategies; in general, all the four super-strategies of politeness were used by the characters. From the conversational exchange between the main characters there has been a general tendency in the use of politeness strategies, moving towards the positive pole. This finding is not in line with what has been presented by Kopytko (1995), in his study on politeness in Shakespeare's plays, and also differs from the ideas of Lin (2005), which concerned with the linguistic realizations of politeness strategies in persuasive discourse in Chinese, and it is similar to the findings of Xueyn (2005), who analyzed the diachronic changes of politeness strategies in English literary discourse on Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Hamlet" and Bernard Shaw's "Major Barbara".
2. The findings from this study also show that the social distance (D) does influence the use of politeness strategies in the drama. In the present study, when it comes to the actual social strangeness or closeness between the speaker and the hearer, the bigger the social distance is, the more polite the speaker tends to be when performing an FTA; the smaller the social distance is, the less polite the speaker tends to be when performing an FTA. This finding is consistent with what Brown and Levinson (1987) have predicted and is in contrast with Bagheri's (1996) observations; in his study on "Application of Politeness Theory in English Poetry".
3. The results of the analysis of the play suggest that unlike the predictions of Brown and Levinson powerful characters does not necessarily use the high number of politeness strategies. To be effective, the use of politeness strategies must be congruent with the role of the interlocutor and his/her status in the particular interaction, and more importantly in relation to the addressee. This finding corroborates the ideas of AlQahtani (2009), who tested the applicability of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness to spoken Saudi Arabic but this result differs from Amou Aliakbari's (2007), estimates that in part of her study on "Social-Interpersonal Power and Politeness Strategies in Persian" explored the effect of addressee's power on the choice and frequency of addressor's politeness strategies.

## References

- Abdesslem, H. (2001). Politeness strategies in the discourse of drama: A case study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30, 111-138.
- AlQahtani, H.A. (2009). *Female use of politeness strategies in the speech act of offering: A contrastive study between spoken Saudi Arabic and spoken British English* (Master's thesis). Retrived from <http://www.academia.edu/2020368/>

Female Use of Politeness Strategies in the Speech Act of Offering: A Contrastive Study between Spoken Saudi Arabic and Spoken British English

- Amou Aliakbari, S. (2007). *Social interpersonal power and politeness strategies in Persian* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran.
- Andersen, G., & Aijmer, K. (2012). *Pragmatics of society*. Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Bagheri, M.S. (1996). *Application of politeness theory in English poetry*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Shiraz University, Iran.
- Brown, R., & Gilman, A. (1989). Politeness theory and Shakespeare's four major tragedies. *Language in Society*, 18, 159-212.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In E. N. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction* (pp. 56–311). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cherry, R. D. (1988). Politeness in written persuasion. *Journal of pragmatics*, 12(1), 63-81.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. C. (2008). *Politeness in Mexico and the United States*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behaviour*. New York: Doubleday.
- Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In: P. Cole and J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14(2), 237–257.
- Lakoff, R. (1973). The logic of politeness; or, minding your p's and q's. In C. Corum, S. Cedric & A. Weiser (Eds.), *Papers from the ninth regional meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society* (pp. 292–305). Chicago: Chicago Linguistics Society.
- Lakoff, R. (1977). What you can do with words: Politeness, pragmatics, and performatives. In A. Rogers, B. Wall & J. Murphy (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Texas conference of performatives, presuppositions and implicatures* (pp. 79-105.). Arlington: Center of Applied Linguistics.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Lin, H. H. (2005). *Contextualizing linguistic politeness in Chinese: A socio-pragmatic approach with examples from persuasivesales talk in Taiwan* ( Doctoral dissertation). Retrired from [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/ap:0:0:APPLICATION\\_PROCESS=DOWNLOAD\\_ETD\\_SUB\\_DOC\\_ACCNUM:::F1501\\_ID:osu1109961198,attachment](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/ap:0:0:APPLICATION_PROCESS=DOWNLOAD_ETD_SUB_DOC_ACCNUM:::F1501_ID:osu1109961198,attachment)
- Kopytko, R. (1995). Linguistic politeness strategies in Shakespeare's plays. In A. H Jucker (Ed.), *Historical pragmatics: Pragmatic development in the history of English* (pp. 515-540). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ogiermann, E. (2009). *On apologising in negative and positive politeness cultures*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Pearson, B. (1988). Power and politeness in conversation: Encoding of face-threatening acts at church business meetings. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 30(1), 68-93.
- Reiter, R. (2000). *Linguistic politeness in Britain and Uruguay: A contrastive study of requests and appologies*. Amesterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Sifianou, M. (1992). *Politeness phenomena in England and Greece: A cross-cultural perspective*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Skewis, M. (2003). Mitigated directness in Honglou meng: directive speech acts and politeness in eighteenth century Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35, 161-189.
- Thomas, J. (1985). The language of power: Towards a dynamic pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9, 765-783.
- Wanli, Z., & Aihong, D. (2008). *An Investigation and analysis of politeness strategies employed in college English teachers' classroom feedback*. Retrieved from <http://www.seiofbluemountain.com/upload/product/201006/2010jyhy03a46.pdf>
- Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness: key topics in sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watts, R. J., Ide, S., & Ehlich, K. (2005). *Politeness in language studies in its history, theory and practice*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wolfson, N. (1983). An empirically based analysis of complimenting in American English. In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 82-95). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Xueyn, W. (2005). *Politeness in English literary discourse: A diachronic study*. (Master's thesis). Retrired from [www.cxrlinguistics.com/UploadFile/201191983719429.doc](http://www.cxrlinguistics.com/UploadFile/201191983719429.doc).