

TEACHERS' POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION: A MIXED-METHODS BASIS FOR A PROPOSED TEACHER POLITENESS INTEGRATION MODEL (TPIM)

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study examined how teachers employ politeness strategies in classroom interaction and how students perceive their effectiveness across motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation. Guided by Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, the study involved two Senior High School teachers and thirteen students from Malibud National High School. Findings revealed that positive politeness strategies, such as praise, encouragement, and humor, were the most frequently used and were perceived as highly effective. Negative politeness and bald-on-record strategies were also effective for clear, respectful communication, whereas off-record strategies were least preferred due to their indirectness. Results suggest that teachers often use politeness unconsciously to balance authority and empathy, fostering mutual respect and engagement. A proposed model was developed to guide the effective and contextual use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction.

Keyword: *linguistic politeness, politeness strategies, classroom interaction*

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective classroom interaction has long been recognized as a cornerstone of both language learning and human relationships. As Dagarin Fojkar (2005) explains, classroom interaction serves two essential functions: it establishes a pleasant atmosphere through friendly relationships among participants. It encourages learners to become effective communicators in a foreign language. Just as in everyday social life, students must be trained to communicate appropriately and meaningfully—a goal that teachers achieve through varied communicative and pragmatic strategies.

In Southeast Asian contexts such as Indonesia and the Philippines, challenges in oral communicative competence persist due to limited exposure to English beyond school settings. Suryati (2015) observed that English is seldom used in daily life in Indonesia, a situation mirrored in Philippine hinterland communities where economic conditions, limited resources, and scarce access to technology restrict opportunities for English practice. Consequently, the classroom becomes the primary venue for developing both structural and communicative competence, underscoring the

indispensable role of teachers in shaping interactional dynamics.

Teacher Language Awareness, as Walsh (2003) conceptualized, transforms into Classroom Interactional Competence, the teacher's ability to mediate and facilitate language learning through effective discourse moves (Walsh, 2011). This competence demands not only mastery of subject matter but also communicative sensitivity, particularly in low-proficiency classrooms. The 2022 PISA results illustrate this challenge, showing that Filipino 15-year-olds scored an average of 347 in reading, ranking 76th out of 81 countries, and only 24% reached baseline proficiency (PISA, 2022). Such statistics highlight the urgency for teachers to adopt communicative approaches that go beyond linguistic accuracy toward pragmatic appropriateness and emotional sensitivity. As Kingwell (1993) asserts, communication is not merely about transferring information but about “not hurting other people's feelings” (p. 401).

Within this framework, politeness strategies emerge as vital tools for maintaining productive and harmonious classroom communication. Jiang (2010) notes that politeness fosters a lively, encouraging classroom atmosphere that increases

students' engagement. Similarly, Mahmud (2019) found that teachers' politeness in EFL classrooms shapes students' attitudes and behaviors, thereby enhancing their willingness to participate. Senowarsito (2010), drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, further demonstrated that politeness mitigates face-threatening acts (FTAs), softens directives, and sustains learners' positive face.

Politeness extends beyond linguistic choice to encompass sociocultural norms. The Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics defines it as a blend of interpersonal sensitivity and culturally grounded linguistic expression (as cited in Jiang, 2010). In Chinese EFL classrooms, Jiang observed that teachers' use of indirect suggestions, polite requests, and supportive language promotes both cognitive engagement and affective bonds among students.

Contemporary classroom challenges further amplify the significance of politeness. Jayanti, Mahmud, and Salija (2019) reported that learners with limited linguistic resources often experience anxiety and fear of criticism, which can hinder communication. Teachers' strategic use of polite, supportive language can bridge these affective gaps. Conversely, incivility or impulsive student behavior can disrupt learning, making teacher politeness a stabilizing force in maintaining order (Purnomo, 2019; Yrisarry, Neuberger, & Neville, 2019). Previous studies also link politeness to improved motivation, self-esteem, and academic performance (Hassan et al., 2017; Gatlabayan, 2025).

Cross-cultural research emphasizes that the enactment of politeness varies across societies. Ardi et al. (2018) and Maha (2014) observed that while indirectness is valued in many Asian contexts, directness may be interpreted as politeness in cultures such as Poland and Russia. This diversity suggests that teachers must adapt politeness strategies according to cultural expectations and classroom context. In EFL settings, Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) found that negative politeness was most frequent, reflecting the inherent power asymmetry between teachers and students. Motivation remains a key determinant of learning success, and the effective use of politeness strategies can sustain learners' motivation and autonomy (Gatlabayan, 2025).

In the Philippine context, these challenges are evident. At Malibud National High School, Senior High School students' Mean Percentage Score (MPS) in English examinations ranges from 50% to 60%, indicating low proficiency levels. Such data highlight the need to examine how teachers' politeness strategies can mitigate communication barriers, enhance motivation, and strengthen classroom rapport.

Taken together, the reviewed studies reveal that politeness strategies fulfill not only linguistic but also motivational, disciplinary, and affective roles in the classroom. However, research gaps remain in integrating both qualitative and quantitative insights to develop a comprehensive model of classroom politeness. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to (a) identify the types of politeness strategies employed by teachers, (b) assess their effectiveness as perceived by students in terms of motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation, and (c) propose a model for the effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction.

1.2 Objectives

This study seeks to explore in depth how teachers employ politeness strategies in classroom interactions and how these strategies foster effective communication and meaningful learning experiences. It seeks to identify and describe the specific types of politeness strategies—positive, negative, bald on record, and off record—utilized by teachers to motivate students, deliver instruction, manage the class, and provide feedback or evaluation. Moreover, the research aims to determine how students assess the effectiveness of these strategies across the four instructional domains—motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation—thereby revealing their perceived impact on engagement and classroom rapport. Ultimately, this study aims to integrate qualitative and quantitative findings to develop a comprehensive model for the effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction, providing a theoretical and practical framework to inform teacher communication practices and pedagogical development.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following key inquiries:

1. What types of politeness strategies are employed by teachers in terms of motivating students, delivering instruction, managing the class, and providing feedback/evaluation?
2. How do students assess the effectiveness of teachers' politeness strategies in classroom interaction with respect to:
 - Motivation
 - Instruction
 - Classroom Management
 - Evaluation?
3. Based on the qualitative and quantitative findings, what model can be developed for the effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to deepen the understanding of how teachers' politeness strategies shape the quality of classroom interaction and influence students' motivation, participation, and learning experience. By examining the specific types of politeness strategies—positive, negative, bald on record, and off record—used by teachers, and by assessing their effectiveness as perceived by students across the domains of motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation, this research aims to generate empirical evidence that clarifies the relationship between teacher communication styles and student engagement. Through its mixed-methods design, the study endeavors to provide practical insights that may guide the development of more responsive and respectful classroom communication frameworks. Ultimately, it aims to enhance teachers' communicative competence and create learning environments characterized by mutual respect, empathy, and meaningful interaction.

1.5 Literature Review

Politeness plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony and mutual respect in communication. Goffman (1967) describes interaction as a ritual where individuals protect their social "face," or self-image, during encounters. Building on this, Brown and Levinson (1987) developed the Politeness Theory, identifying two aspects of face—positive and negative—and four major strategies: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Speakers select among these strategies depending on factors such as power,

distance, and imposition. Later studies, including those by Culpeper et al. (2003) and Bousfield (2010), introduced the concept of impoliteness, showing that both polite and impolite behaviors coexist in interaction, particularly in hierarchical settings such as classrooms.

In educational contexts, teachers perform many face-threatening acts such as giving instructions or corrections; thus, they must balance authority with empathy. Dagarin (2005) emphasized that classroom communication is a social process in which teachers act as both facilitators and leaders. In the Philippines, Umila (2018)—whose work inspires the present study—found that teachers use politeness to maintain rapport, provide feedback, and sustain learners' motivation. Similarly, Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) found that teachers frequently use positive politeness to build solidarity and motivation, and negative politeness to deliver directives tactfully.

Research further shows that politeness is context-dependent. Peng and Xie (2014) reported that teachers vary their strategies depending on the instructional purpose, while Sutyrajmi, Mahmud, and Weda (2025) identified factors such as power, social distance, and cultural norms that affect language choice. Students, too, employ politeness strategies to show respect and maintain harmony, often adapting their expressions to digital contexts through emojis or indirect phrasing (Wang, 2020; Surani et al., 2025).

Brown and Levinson's framework remains highly relevant in classroom discourse, where communication is both instructional and relational. Filipino teachers' politeness is also shaped by cultural values such as pakikisama (harmony) and paggalang (respect) (Gatlabayan, 2025). These cultural norms emphasize empathy and relational care, turning politeness into both a linguistic and moral practice. Grounded in this theory and cultural lens, the present study examines teachers' use of politeness strategies in the domains of motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation, integrating insights from Umila (2018) to develop a model for effective classroom communication.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study employs a mixed-methods research design, which is considered highly appropriate in

investigating complex social phenomena such as politeness strategies in classroom interaction. A mixed-methods design integrates both quantitative and qualitative data, thus enabling the researcher to capture not only the observable manifestations of teachers' linguistic behaviors but also the perceptions of students regarding their effectiveness. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), mixed methods research allows for the convergence and triangulation of findings, thereby providing greater validity and depth to the study.

The first statement of the problem is addressed through qualitative classroom observations, which systematically identify the types of politeness strategies employed by teachers during actual classroom interactions. The second statement of the problem is also quantitative, conducted through a survey questionnaire to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of these politeness strategies in terms of motivation, instructional delivery, classroom management, and evaluation. The results of both data sets are then synthesized to develop a model for the effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction.

2.2 Participants

The study involved two Senior High School teachers and thirteen Grade 12 students from the General Academic Strand at Malibud National High School. The teachers, handling Practical Research 2 and Personal Development, were purposively selected for their subjects' strong focus on personal, academic, and social interaction. Their classes were observed to capture authentic teacher-student communication. Meanwhile, the students from Section Blessed participated in the survey assessing the effectiveness of teachers' politeness strategies. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that all participants were directly engaged in the observed classroom interactions.

2.3 Data Collection

After securing consent, two sixty-minute classroom observations were conducted and recorded to document teachers' use of politeness strategies during instruction, classroom management, and evaluation. The researcher then oriented the student participants about their role and assured confidentiality. Two days later, a modified version of the questionnaire was administered to twelve students to assess the effectiveness of teachers' politeness strategies.

The data from the recorded observations and student surveys were analyzed and synthesized to develop a proposed model for the effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction.

2.4 Data Analysis

The study consisted of two phases. The first phase was the qualitative analysis, which aimed to identify the politeness strategies used by teachers during classroom interaction. Classroom observations were conducted and recorded to capture authentic teacher-student exchanges. The recorded interactions were transcribed, and the teachers' utterances were analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness strategies. Each utterance was examined and classified as a form of positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, or bald-on-record strategy. The categorized data provided insights into how politeness strategies were employed across instruction, motivation, classroom management, and evaluation.

The second phase was the quantitative analysis, which aimed to determine how students assessed the effectiveness of these politeness strategies. A survey questionnaire, adapted and modified from Umila (2018), was administered to 12 students. The instrument was contextualized based on classroom observation results to ensure alignment with the local teaching environment. Students rated the effectiveness of teachers' politeness strategies in terms of motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation, using a four-point scale: (4) Highly Effective, (3) Effective, (2) Slightly Effective, and (1) Not Effective. The results from both phases were integrated to develop a proposed model for the effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Politeness strategies used by teachers in classroom interaction

The transcribed data from classroom observations of two teachers yielded 71 utterances identified as politeness strategies. These utterances were systematically coded according to four principal dimensions of classroom interaction: motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation. These dimensions correspond to the teachers' core communicative functions—stimulating learner motivation, delivering and processing instructional content, sustaining

classroom discipline and order, and providing evaluative or feedback-oriented responses.

The analysis indicated that positive politeness emerged as the most frequently utilized strategy across all dimensions of classroom interaction. Teachers predominantly employed compliments, humor, and inclusive linguistic forms to promote engagement and establish a collegial learning atmosphere. Off-record strategies, characterized by rhetorical questioning, teasing, and indirect hints, were likewise evident, particularly when teachers aimed to mitigate tension or redirect behavior while maintaining approachability.

Conversely, bald-on-record strategies were primarily observed during instructional delivery and classroom management, where teachers were required to issue explicit directions, procedural clarifications, or disciplinary reminders to sustain task focus and instructional flow. Negative politeness strategies, although the least frequently observed, were manifested in formal requests, hedging expressions, and cautionary remarks designed to minimize imposition and uphold learner autonomy.

Positive politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies emphasize friendliness and solidarity between the speaker and the listener. They aim to address the listener's positive face needs and foster mutual rapport. As noted by Brown and Levinson (1987), such strategies function as positive face redress. In this study, teachers demonstrated positive politeness through various utterances drawn from the coded classroom transcript:

(S1) Sige, ganahan ko ato. (Alright, I like that.)

(S2) Wow! That's a good idea, Ms. Malibud Candidate!

(S3) Maybe you'll have your college life you can use the template.

(S4) Naunsa diay ka ****? Abstract idea. Happiness. Yeeeeeeyyy! (What happened to you, ****?)

In S1 to S4, the teachers employed a range of positive politeness strategies to affirm students' responses and cultivate a supportive classroom climate. Utterances such as "Sige, ganahan ko ato" ("Alright, I like that") and "Wow! That's a good

idea, Ms. Malibud Candidate" illustrate explicit praise and admiration that satisfy students' positive-face wants the desire to be valued and approved (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

A particularly notable instance occurred when the teacher humorously remarked, *"Naunsa diay ka ****? Abstract idea. Happiness. Yeeeeeeyyy!" ("What happened to you, ****?"). The class burst into laughter as the teacher, surprised by the student's reaction, cleverly connected the moment to their topic on abstract ideas. By quickly inserting "happiness" as an example and cheerfully exclaiming "Yeeeeeeyyy!" in a playful tone while clapping, the teacher's wit turned an ordinary moment into a humorous learning episode. The shared laughter that ensued demonstrated how humor can operate as a positive-politeness strategy, reducing social distance, validating students' emotions, and strengthening a sense of belonging and community.

From a psychological perspective, such positive exchanges are not merely social gestures but are affectively grounded. Studies in social neuroscience show that praise and laughter activate the brain's reward circuitry, particularly the ventral striatum associated with feelings of pleasure, belongingness, and motivation (Izuma et al., 2008; Bhanji & Delgado, 2013). Accordingly, the teacher's witty use of humor and affirmation in these instances not only addresses students' positive face needs but also stimulates emotional engagement, promoting cooperation and active participation during class discussions.

In some statements, the teacher asked for confirmation or sought for agreement with the students as illustrated in (S6) to (S8):

(S5) Diba mapuno mo sige receive? (Aren't you getting full from always receiving?)

(S6) These are the guide questions and I hope naka-guide ni siya. (These are the guide questions, and I hope these have guided you.)

(S7) Learn to forgive ha? Pero dili sad pwede nga ag sayon-sayonon lang pirmi? (Learn to forgive, okay? But it shouldn't be taken lightly all the time, right?)

The utterances from (S5) to (S7) exemplify positive politeness strategies in which the teacher seeks confirmation and shared agreement with

students. Each statement functions to maintain rapport by attending to the learners' positive face—their need to be acknowledged and approved (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

These utterances parallel the confirmation and common-ground strategies identified by Hobjilă (2012), in which teachers employ cooperative phrasing, such as “I believe we all agree...” to sustain solidarity. Similarly, the teacher's use of rhetorical tags like “diba” (“isn't it”) and hedges such as “ha?” and “I hope” softens assertions, allowing students to participate in meaning-making without feeling imposed upon. This alignment with Muhsinin's (2012) findings reflects how teachers' learner-centered orientation encourages the use of politeness strategies that validate students' opinions and promote collaborative dialogue in class discussions.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, these strategies also relate to Krashen's (1979) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that learning is more efficient when anxiety is low and interaction is supportive. By framing instructions and reflections in confirming and inclusive language, the teacher minimizes potential face threats and reduces emotional barriers that might inhibit participation. Consequently, these positive-politeness acts foster an environment where learners feel comfortable expressing their views, thereby facilitating both linguistic and affective engagement.

Using inclusive and collective expressions such as “Good morning, class,” “Please say ‘Good Morning’ to Ma’am Kath,” and “Clap your hands” signaled the teacher's attempt to create a sense of shared identity and belonging within the classroom, reflecting the use of in-group identity markers as demonstrated in (S8) to (S10).

(S8) Please say ‘Good Morning’ to Ma’am Kath.

(S9) Good morning class. / Good afternoon everyone.

(S10) Clap your hands!

The utterances illustrate the teacher's effort to promote in-group identity and classroom inclusiveness. These expressions fall under Brown and Levinson's (1987) sub-strategy of “using in-group identity markers,” a positive-politeness device that signals shared membership and

solidarity between speaker and hearers. By addressing learners collectively through group-referent nouns such as “class” and inclusive imperatives like “Clap your hands,” the teacher linguistically constructs students as part of a single social unit.

This finding aligns with Hobjilă (2012), who reported that teachers frequently rely on collective address forms to foster cohesion and reduce social distance. Likewise, Holmes (2008) and Cutting (2002) emphasized that the use of inclusive pronouns, group greetings, and collective directives reinforces cooperation by framing interaction as a joint activity rather than a unilateral command. In the present data, these utterances serve not merely as routine classroom management cues but as affiliative acts that cultivate belongingness and participation. By recognizing students as co-participants in the learning process, the teacher transforms hierarchical relations into a more collaborative, community-oriented classroom discourse.

Using encouraging utterances such as “I want you to ponder on this reflection” and “Maybe you'll have your college life... you can use the template” demonstrated how the teacher employed supportive language to inspire reflection and perseverance, as shown in (S11) to (S14).

(S11) Okay, learn to forgive ha.

(S12) I want you to ponder on this reflection.

(S13) Taga-e ko ninyo'g rason nganong mapasalamaton mo? (Give me a reason why you are thankful.)

(S14) Maybe you'll have your college life... you can use the template.

During observation, the teacher's tone was calm and empathetic, and these statements were delivered with noticeable sincerity. In S11, the particle “ha” softened the directive and added emotional warmth. In S12 and S13, students were asked to reflect on values and gratitude—activities that encouraged them to connect lessons to their lived experiences. When the teacher remarked, “Maybe you'll have your college life...”, the students laughed and expressed enthusiasm, revealing that the statement motivated them and acknowledged their aspirations.

These utterances illustrate positive politeness through encouragement and empathy, which

attend to students' positive-face needs—the desire to be valued and understood (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This finding is consistent with that of Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020), who found that teachers' encouraging remarks in EFL classrooms help reduce hierarchical barriers and promote active participation. Similarly, Pattiasina et al. (2017) concluded that praise and motivational comments serve affective purposes and reinforce academic engagement when delivered strategically. In line with Hobjilă (2012) and Holmes (2008), this study shows that motivational politeness strengthens the teacher-student bond, creating an emotionally safe climate that stimulates reflection and expression. The teacher's linguistic choices, therefore, demonstrate that encouragement is not merely a moral gesture but a pragmatic strategy that sustains learning interaction and fosters student confidence.

Bald-on record politeness strategies. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the bald-on record strategy occurs when a speaker performs a face-threatening act (FTA) directly and without any attempt to mitigate its effect on the hearer. In this strategy, the speaker gives priority to efficiency, clarity, and immediacy over politeness, particularly in contexts where urgency or task completion is more important than maintaining the hearer's face needs. Within the classroom, this form of discourse often emerges during instructional delivery, procedural reminders, or disciplinary actions, where teachers are expected to assert authority and ensure understanding (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020).

As observed in the present study, bald-on record strategies were commonly used by teachers when providing directions, clarifying concepts, and transitioning between activities. These unmitigated directives and questions enabled teachers to communicate with precision and sustain lesson continuity. Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) note that teachers frequently employ direct imperatives in English-as-a-Foreign-Language classrooms to avoid ambiguity and maintain instructional flow. Similarly, Syting and Gildore (2022) found that Filipino teachers often alternate between directness and politeness depending on the communicative goal, with bald-on-record strategies serving as efficient tools for classroom control and focus.

Moreover, although positive politeness was used more often during instruction, bald-on-record strategies were also necessary, particularly when teachers needed to convey instructions or information quickly to minimize disruption to the lesson. In these moments, direct speech allowed the teacher to maintain the rhythm of classroom discourse while ensuring that students immediately understood what was expected of them. This was evident in statements such as:

(S15) Let's go back one more time.

(S16) I told you to read in advance.

(S17) Sssshhh!

(S18) Try to do a reflection.

(S19) You try to look at the paper.

These examples illustrate how direct and unmitigated utterances served instructional and procedural purposes. In S15 and S19, the teacher issued commands to redirect focus and guide reflective activities, while S16 and S18 functioned as reminders of prior tasks and materials to review. The utterance "Sssshhh!" (S17) was a spontaneous disciplinary response to classroom noise. Despite the lack of politeness markers, these statements were not perceived as impolite; instead, they reflected the teacher's legitimate authority and intention to maintain lesson structure. In a similar observation, Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) explained that when teachers directly instructed students to perform a task, it did not create undue pressure because such directness was socially accepted as part of the teacher's institutional power in the classroom. This suggests that bald-on record strategies, while inherently face-threatening, may still be interpreted as pedagogically appropriate when grounded in legitimate authority and relational trust. As Brown and Levinson (1987) argue, directness in institutional discourse is not inherently impolite when the speaker's role and authority are contextually acknowledged.

In discussing lessons, the teacher used direct questions to elicit responses from students, such as those from (S20) to (S22):

(S20) Sunod? / Unsa pa? (Next? / What else?)

(S21) So, okay na karon? (So, is it okay now?)

(S22) Unsa inyong gibuhat atong Sunday? (What did you do last Sunday?)

These utterances exemplify how bald-on record questioning can stimulate active participation and sustain attention during the lesson discussion. The teacher used these questions to encourage immediate responses and guide the flow of ideas, ensuring that all students remained engaged. This pattern supports Umila's (2018) findings that direct questioning increases students' response rates, as teachers make follow-up questions while listening to students' ideas, promoting interaction and the processing of ideas during discussions. In S20, the teacher's question served as a prompt for continuation, encouraging students to add more ideas without hesitation.

In S21, however, the question "So, okay na karon?" carried an affective dimension. It was asked during a reflective segment when one student admitted being emotionally affected by the previous topic on "Developing Relationships: Family relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships." The teacher used this direct question not only to check comprehension but also to validate the student's emotional experience and encourage openness. The straightforward tone of the question showed empathy while maintaining instructional flow, bridging both cognitive and emotional engagement.

Meanwhile, in S22 "Unsa inyong gibuhat atong Sunday?" or "What did you do on Sunday?" was asked to connect students' real-life experiences with the ongoing discussion. This question exemplified the teacher's effort to use authentic examples to make the lesson more relatable and meaningful. The teacher's follow-up feedback after students' responses helped reinforce learning by linking personal experiences to theoretical concepts. As Gatlabayan (2025) emphasizes, employing bald-on record strategies in teacher-student interactions can reduce the perceived distance between the two parties. Through direct yet supportive feedback, students feel more comfortable and less anxious, as they receive clear, unambiguous communication that sustains understanding and rapport.

Negative politeness strategies. An act is employed to avoid imposing on the hearer and to maintain the hearer's freedom of action. Negative politeness strategies are characterized by expressions of deference, hesitation, indirectness,

or mitigation such as hedging, apologizing, and the use of polite modals or hopeful expressions. In educational discourse, negative politeness softens directives, making them sound less coercive and more considerate of students' autonomy. Rather than asserting authority, the teacher demonstrates respect for students' time, effort, and emotional space, thereby preserving harmony and minimizing potential face threats.

In this study, negative politeness was observed primarily during instructional closure and feedback, with the teacher using softened directives and hopeful statements to remind students of their responsibilities in a non-imposing manner. The following utterances illustrate this strategy:

(S23) I hope the remaining time will be used in making the concept paper.

(S24) I am hoping nga wala na dinhi. (I am hoping that it's no longer here.)

These expressions reveal the teacher's use of hedging and deference through the modal phrase "I hope" and the progressive construction "I am hoping," which imply a request rather than a command. By using such forms, the teacher maintained authority while showing sensitivity to the students' face needs. As Brown and Levinson (1987) explain, negative politeness reflects the speaker's effort to respect the hearer's negative face, which is the desire not to be imposed upon. Negative politeness, also known as negative face redress, addresses the hearer's need for freedom of action and freedom from imposition in making his or her own decisions (Umila, 2018). (S23) and (S24) resemble the first approach to negative politeness, which is to be conventionally indirect. In this case, the teacher's use of hopeful, indirect phrasing softened the directive tone, promoting cooperation without appearing demanding or authoritarian.

This strategy is also evident when the teacher made polite requests that minimized imposition, as seen in the following statements:

(S25) Kindly tell me an example.

(S26) Kindly read everyone.

(S27) May I have a chair please?

(S28) Please say 'Good Morning' to Ma'am Kath.

These utterances demonstrate the teacher's use of negative politeness through mitigated and deferential requests. While the statements were inherently directive, the inclusion of politeness markers such as "please," "kindly," and the modal "may" softened the illocutionary force of the commands, reducing potential face threat. The lexical choice "kindly" in (S25) and (S26) framed the directives as courteous appeals rather than authoritative orders, while "may I" in (S27) transformed what could have been an imperative into a request for permission. In (S28), the teacher's polite phrasing not only served as a directive but also as a form of social modeling, encouraging students to practice respect and courtesy in their interactions.

The use of "May I" in (S27) corresponds with the findings of Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020), who noted that negative politeness strategies often occur in classroom interactions when teachers seek to minimize coercion. In their study, the utterance "May I have one?" was classified as a polite request that expresses respect while asking permission, reflecting the teacher's desire to act considerately and display good manners. Likewise, the teacher in this study used "May I have a chair, please?" to achieve the same function as requesting without imposing. Similarly, Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) observed that teachers mitigate direct instructions through polite expressions such as "Please count until six," which parallels (S28) in the current data. The inclusion of "please" softened the command and made it socially acceptable, signaling the teacher's kindness and relational awareness.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness strategies aim to respect the hearer's negative face, the desire to act freely and uncoerced. The teacher's linguistic choices show awareness of classroom power asymmetry and an intentional effort to mitigate it. Holmes (2008) explains that such linguistic politeness fosters a cooperative tone, encouraging voluntary cooperation rather than forced compliance. Similarly, Umila (2018) found that teachers employ softened imperatives to balance authority with empathy, allowing students to follow directions willingly while preserving self-esteem. This finding also parallels Gatlabayan's (2025) observation that teachers consciously choose language that avoids imposing on students' preferences or schedules. By maintaining a

considerate tone, the teacher fosters a comfortable, respectful atmosphere, enabling students to comply without feeling pressured.

The teacher's careful use of "kindly," "please," and "may I" underscores a communicative approach that values relational harmony. Such linguistic politeness not only sustains classroom order but also reflects cultural norms of respect embedded in Filipino interaction. These mitigated expressions, the teacher successfully balances authority with empathy, ensuring that communication remains effective, respectful, and socially attuned.

Off-Record politeness strategies. A communicative act is considered off record when it is phrased in such a way that the speaker's intention is indirect or interpretable, and therefore deniable (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In off-record politeness, the speaker does not state the request, criticism, or evaluation explicitly; instead, meaning is implied through hints, rhetorical questions, sarcasm, or ambiguity. This strategy reduces the imposition on the hearer by allowing them interpretive flexibility. If the message is negatively received, the speaker can retract or soften responsibility because the utterance was not framed as a direct claim or command (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In the present study, off-record politeness strategies emerged most clearly in the area of classroom management, where the teacher needed to call attention to student behavior or attitudes without overtly confronting or embarrassing any particular learner. The following utterances illustrate this:

(S29) So, inanha inyong gibuhah? (So, that's what you did?)

(S30) Diba, lahi ra? (Isn't it different?)

(S31) Tama ba or napugos ka? (Is that right, or were you forced?)

In (S29), "So, inanha inyong gibuhah?" the teacher does not directly accuse the students of doing something inappropriate or off-task, but rather frames the remark as a reflective observation. This utterance was used after a group of students informally explained what they had done during a pair or group activity. Instead of immediately evaluating their behavior as acceptable or unacceptable, the teacher posed a rhetorical question that indirectly drew attention to the quality or sincerity of their work. The statement

implies mild disapproval or challenge, but it is not phrased as direct blame. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) description of off-record critique: the teacher signals that something about the behavior may not be ideal, leaving space for students to justify, clarify, or self-correct. In classroom terms, this is a way to discipline without overtly disciplining.

Similarly, (S30) "Diba, lahi ra?" is an example of an evaluative hint framed as confirmation-seeking. In observation, this type of utterance commonly occurred after a student offered an answer that only partially aligned with the lesson's intended concept. Instead of contradicting the student directly (e.g., "That is wrong"), the teacher used a rhetorical tag question "Diba, lahi ra?" to guide the student toward recognizing the gap between their answer and the target idea. The teacher here is not explicitly rejecting the answer, but is inviting the learner to notice the difference for themselves. This move reflects what Umila (2018) described as guided clarification through indirect disagreement: teachers ask questions that signal contrast or misalignment rather than openly declaring a response incorrect. Such indirect negotiation of correctness preserves the student's positive face while still advancing instructional accuracy. It also resembles what Syting and Gildore (2022) observed in Philippine classrooms, where teachers often avoid blunt rejection and instead frame correction through shared reflection, thus maintaining rapport and preventing embarrassment.

Utterance (S31) "Tama ba or napugos ka?" is particularly notable because it touches on a student's emotional state while maintaining deniability. This question typically arises in affective or values-based discussions, such as topics in Personal Development (e.g., relationships, decision-making, consent). The teacher asks, "Is that right, or were you forced?" rather than asserting "You were forced" or "You only did that because of pressure." By phrasing it as a choice, the teacher acknowledges the possibility that the student may have acted under pressure without directly accusing anyone. This protects the student from immediate face threat (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and allows them to respond on their own terms. In the observed class, this type of questioning allowed students to admit discomfort or uncertainty without being publicly called out. This aligns with Gatlabayan's (2025)

description of relational sensitivity in teacher talk: the teacher remains present and attentive to the student's situation but avoids language that would make the student feel cornered or judged in front of peers. In other words, the teacher manages both behavioral guidance and emotional safeguarding.

These off-record utterances share several features. First, they are all structured as questions, not statements. Second, they all place interpretive work on the student. Third, they offer a "way out": the student can answer minimally, redirect, or laugh it off without openly admitting fault. This is consistent with Cutting (2002), who notes that indirectness, including teasing and rhetorical questioning, can function as a socially acceptable mode of classroom control because it signals that the teacher has noticed something without fully escalating it. It is also consistent with Holmes (2008), who argues that in supportive classrooms, indirect forms of challenge can be used to maintain solidarity even while exerting control.

In terms of classroom function, off-record politeness in these instances serves as a socially safe disciplinary and evaluative tool. For (S29), the teacher manages on-task behavior without publicly shaming a group. For (S30), the teacher corrects an answer and steers the learner toward the intended concept while maintaining the student's dignity. For (S31), the teacher creates space for honesty about personal or relational pressure—a sensitive topic in a values-based subject—while avoiding a confrontational tone. These findings parallel observations from Syting and Gildore (2022), who reported that Filipino teachers often rely on humor, rhetorical framing, and indirect challenge when addressing delicate matters, especially those related to personal feelings, romantic concerns, or interpersonal conflict in class. The strategy maintains classroom order and moral clarity but frames it as a joint reflection rather than an accusation.

Finally, it is important to note that off-record politeness in these cases does not indicate lack of control. Rather, it shows controlled restraint. By remaining indirect, the teacher preserves authority without escalating tension. This is particularly significant in discussions where the topics are personally sensitive (e.g., "Were you forced?") or socially delicate (e.g., "That's what you did?" in front of peers). In such cases, direct confrontation can lead to silence, resistance, or embarrassment; the off-the-record approach

keeps students engaged and willing to speak. This supports the observation in Umila (2018) that indirect forms of challenge in teacher discourse can sustain participation and reduce resistance because students feel they are being consulted rather than accused.

Taken together, (S19), (S30), and (S31) illustrate the pragmatic usefulness of off-record politeness in classroom management and affective monitoring. The teacher regulates behavior, elicits accountability, and probes for authenticity, but does so through implication and guided self-assessment rather than overt control. This form of indirect control balances discipline with respect and allows emotionally charged content to be processed without public face-loss, which is crucial in collectivist and relationally oriented classroom cultures such as the Philippine setting (Syting & Gildore, 2022; Gatlabayan, 2025).

3.2 Students' perception of the effectiveness of politeness strategies used by teachers in classroom interaction

An overall analysis of the results on the effectiveness of politeness strategies employed by teachers in classroom interaction revealed that all strategies were assessed as moderately effective across the four interaction aspects—motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation. Furthermore, the findings suggest that teachers' ability to combine multiple politeness strategies contributed to the overall effectiveness of classroom communication. A more detailed examination, however, indicates the need to analyze the specific strategies used in each interactional context to determine which forms of politeness are most contextually appropriate and pedagogically effective.

Table 1

Students' perception on the effectiveness of politeness strategies used for motivation

Statements	Politeness Strategy	Mean	Qualitative descriptor
"Sige, ganahan ko ato." (Alright, I like that.)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.69	Highly Effective
"Okay, learn to forgive ha."□ (Okay, learn to forgive, alright?)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective
"I want you to ponder on this reflection."	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.46	Moderately Effective

"Wow! Blessed kayo ka!" (Wow! You are so blessed!)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.62	Highly Effective
"Taga-e ko ninyo'g rason nganong mapasalamaton mo."□ (Give me a reason why you are thankful.)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.31	Moderately Effective
"Kinsay pirmi ga sorry diri?" (Who always says sorry here?)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.46	Moderately Effective
"Learn to forgive ha? Pero dili sad pwede nga ag sayon-sayonon lang pirmi?" (Learn to forgive, okay? But don't take it too lightly all the time?)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective
"Maybe you'll have your college life you can use the template." (Encouraging future success)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.38	Moderately Effective
"I want you to give your idea."	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.85	Highly Effective

Table 1 shows that five statements were rated highly effective, while four were moderately effective. The highest mean was obtained by "I want you to give your idea" (M = 3.85), followed by "Sige, ganahan ko ato" (Alright, I like that) (M = 3.69) and "Wow! Blessed kayo ka!" (Wow! You are so blessed!) (M = 3.62). These results indicate that praise, encouragement, and inclusion were perceived as the most motivating forms of teacher talk. Positive politeness, as described by Brown and Levinson (1987), affirms students' positive face and encourages classroom participation. Similar findings by Peng and Xie (2014) and Farid and Lubis (2020) confirm that verbal appreciation enhances learners' confidence and engagement.

The statements "Okay, learn to forgive ha" (M = 3.54) and "Learn to forgive ha? Pero dili sad pwede nga ag sayon-sayonon lang pirmi?" (M = 3.54) also rated highly, showing that affective and moral support fosters motivation. Gatlabayan (2025) and Yusof and Halim (2021) emphasized that emotionally considerate language strengthens teacher-student rapport and increases intrinsic motivation.

Meanwhile, "I want you to ponder on this reflection" (M = 3.46) and "Taga-e ko ninyo'g rason nganong mapasalamaton mo" (Give me a reason why you are thankful) (M = 3.31) were rated moderately effective. Reflective prompts,

though positive, require higher cognitive effort and may evoke less immediate emotional engagement (Svinicki, 2004). Likewise, “Maybe you’ll have your college life—you can use the template” (M = 3.38) received a moderate rating, suggesting that future-oriented motivation is less impactful than immediate feedback (Noor & Hashim, 2020).

Table 2

Statements	Politeness Strategy	Mean	Qualitative descriptor
"Let's go back one more time."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	3.31	Moderately Effective
"Try to do a reflection."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	3.46	Moderately Effective
"Let's begin with.."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	3.38	Moderately Effective
"Again, we are talking about responsibilities with our partner."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	3.54	Highly Effective
"You try to see your output."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	3.31	Moderately Effective
"I told you to read in advance."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	2.92	Moderately Effective
"You try to look at the paper."	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	3.15	Moderately Effective
"Kindly tell me an example."	Negative Politeness Strategy	3.23	Moderately Effective
"Kindly read everyone."	Negative Politeness Strategy	3.46	Moderately Effective
"These are the guide questions and I hope naka-guide ni siya." (I hope these guide questions have helped you.)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.77	Highly Effective

Table 2 shows that most instructional statements were rated moderately effective, with only one rated highly effective. The statement “These are the guide questions and I hope naka-guide ni siya” (M = 3.77) gained the highest rating, indicating that students valued instructional talk that expressed empathy and reassurance, typical of

positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 2008).

Among the bald-on-record strategies, “Again, we are talking about responsibilities with our partner” (M = 3.54) received the highest mean, showing that direct clarification is accepted when used to maintain lesson continuity. Other statements such as “Try to do a reflection” (M = 3.46) and “Let’s begin with...” (M = 3.38) were rated moderately effective, reflecting students’ preference for clarity in instruction (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020). The lowest-rated, “I told you to read in advance” (M = 2.92), suggests that reminders perceived as evaluative may lessen motivational impact (Peng & Xie, 2014).

Negative politeness strategies such as “Kindly tell me an example” (M = 3.23) and “Kindly read everyone” (M = 3.46) were moderately effective. The use of kindly softened directives and the conveyance of respect, consistent with findings that polite markers reduce imposition in classroom discourse (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020; Yusof & Halim, 2021). Overall, students preferred instructional speech that combined directness with empathy and minimized threat to their face.

Table 3

Students’ perception of the effectiveness of politeness strategies used for classroom management

Statements	Politeness Strategy	Mean	Qualitative descriptor
"So, inanha inyong gibuhat?" (So, that's what you did?)	Off-record Politeness Strategies	2.85	Moderately Effective
"Diba, lahi ra?" (See, it's different, right?)	Off-record Politeness Strategies	3.54	Highly Effective
"Tama ba or napugos ka?" (Is that right or were you just forced?)	Off-record Politeness Strategies	3.23	Moderately Effective
"Sssshhh!"	Bald-on Record Politeness Strategies	2.62	Moderately Effective
"Nganong behave kayo mo?" (Why are you all so behaved?)	Off-record Politeness Strategies	3.00	Moderately Effective
"Okay, thank you."	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.62	Highly Effective
"Please say “Good Morning to Ma'am Kath."	Negative Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective

"May I have a chair please?"	Negative Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective
"I am hoping nga wala na dinhi." (I am hoping it's no longer here.)	Negative Politeness Strategy	3.62	Highly Effective

Table 3 presents students' perceptions of the politeness strategies teachers use to manage the class. Results show that both negative and positive politeness strategies were rated as highly effective, while off-record and bald-on-record strategies were rated as moderately effective. The highest-rated statements, "Okay, thank you" (M = 3.62) and "I am hoping nga wala na dinhi" (I am hoping it's no longer here) (M = 3.62), indicate that expressions of appreciation and indirect reminders effectively maintain order without threatening students' face. Such politeness mitigates authority and reinforces respect, aligning with Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of minimizing imposition in classroom discourse.

Negative politeness strategies such as "Please say 'Good Morning' to Ma'am Kath" (M = 3.54) and "May I have a chair, please?" (M = 3.54) were likewise highly effective. The use of please and may signals deference and politeness in issuing directives, confirming Fitriyani and Andriyanti's (2020) finding that conventional politeness markers lessen imposition and sustain cooperation.

In contrast, off-record strategies—"So, inanha inyong gibuhat?" (So, that's what you did?) (M = 2.85), "Tama ba or napugos ka?" (Is that right or were you just forced?) (M = 3.23), and "Nganong behave kayo mo?" (Why are you all so behaved?) (M = 3.00)—were perceived as moderately effective. These rhetorical or teasing remarks rely on humor and indirectness to correct or engage students without overt criticism. Holmes (2008) and Yusof and Halim (2021) note that humor in teacher talk promotes rapport but may reduce perceived authority if overused.

The statement "Sssshhh!" (M = 2.62) was rated lowest, suggesting that direct commands, while effective for immediate control, lack politeness markers and may be viewed as abrupt (Peng & Xie, 2014). Conversely, "Diba, lahi ra?" (See, it's different, right?) (M = 3.54) shows that off-record remarks seeking agreement can manage attention positively, as students interpret them as part of shared understanding rather than reprimand.

Table 4

Students' perception on the effectiveness of politeness strategies used for evaluation

Statements	Politeness Strategy	Mean	Qualitative descriptor
"Wow! That's a good idea, Ms. Malibud Candidate."	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective
"Wow!" / "Woowooooow!"	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective
"I hope the remaining time will be used in making the concept paper."	Negative Politeness Strategy	3.54	Highly Effective
"Good morning class." / "Good afternoon everyone."	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.62	Highly Effective
"So, okay na karon?" (So, are we good now?)	Positive Politeness Strategy	3.46	Moderately Effective

Table 4 shows that most evaluation-related statements were rated highly effective, indicating that students valued feedback delivered through positive and negative politeness strategies. The statement "Good morning class" / "Good afternoon everyone" obtained the highest mean (M = 3.62), suggesting that greetings contribute to a supportive atmosphere even during evaluative moments. Holmes (2008) and Yusof and Halim (2021) assert that routine greetings establish rapport and reduce anxiety, allowing evaluation to occur within a friendly context.

Statements such as "Wow! That's a good idea, Ms. Malibud Candidate" and "Wow!" / "Woowooooow!" (both M = 3.54) reflect positive politeness through praise and encouragement. These utterances affirm student performance and strengthen classroom solidarity, consistent with Peng and Xie (2014) who note that verbal appreciation enhances learners' confidence and participation.

The statement "I hope the remaining time will be used in making the concept paper" (M = 3.54) represents negative politeness, expressing direction indirectly through the hedge "I hope." This minimizes imposition while maintaining authority (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020). Lastly, "So, okay na karon?" (So, are we good now?) (M = 3.46) was rated moderately effective, showing that requests for

confirmation promote cooperation but yield less emotional reinforcement than direct praise.

3.3 Model for effective use of politeness strategies

Based on the study's findings, a model was formulated to guide the appropriate and effective use of politeness strategies in classroom interaction. In developing this model (as illustrated in Figure 1), the researcher synthesized teachers' insights and classroom experiences with

students' perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies. The integration of both perspectives allowed the model to reflect the actual communicative realities of classroom interaction, thereby contextualizing Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework within the teaching practices of Malibud National High School. The model, therefore, provides a practical guide for teachers in selecting suitable politeness strategies according to the four communicative functions of teaching, motivation, instruction, and classroom

Linguistic politeness strategies in classroom interactions

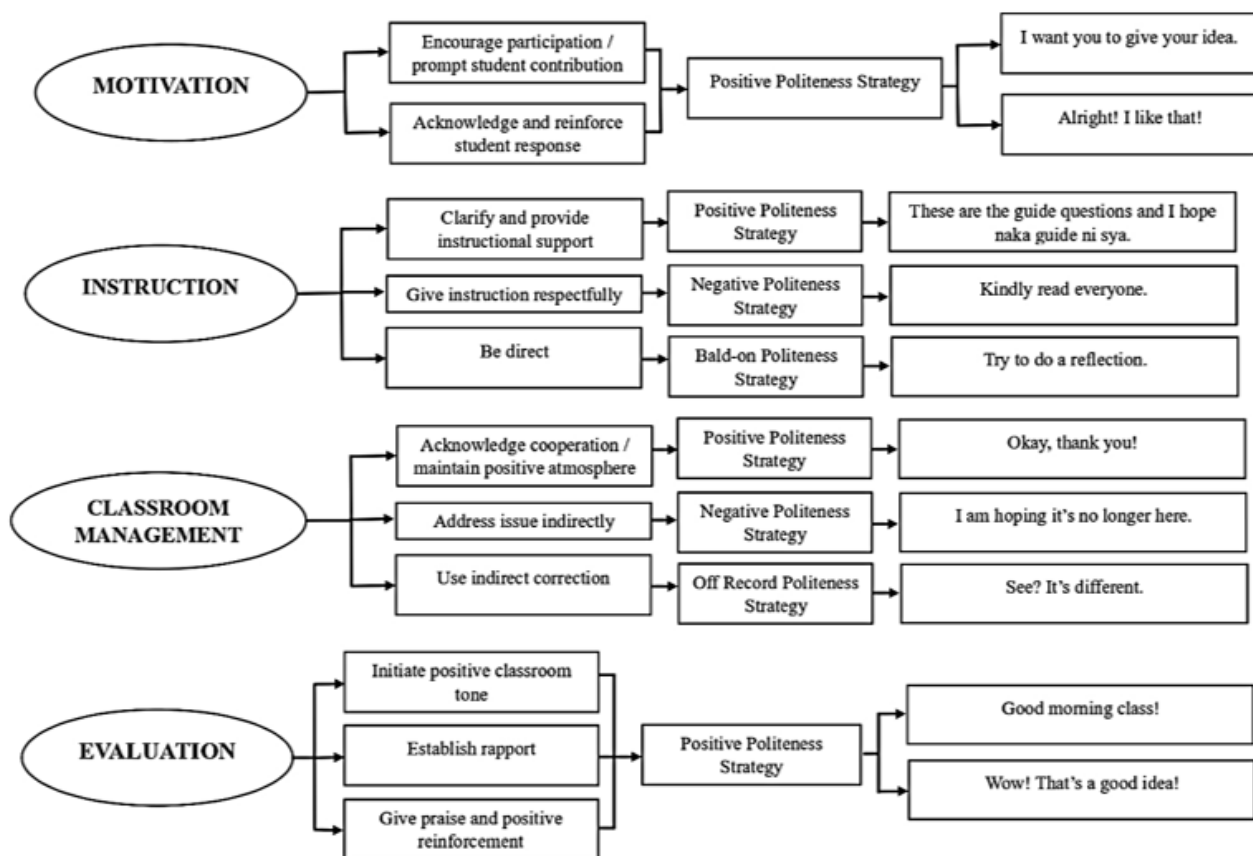


Figure 1. Teacher Politeness Integration Model (TPIM)

Figure 1 presents the Teacher Politeness Integration Model (TPIM) of Teachers' Politeness Strategies in Classroom Interaction. The model illustrates the systematic and contextual use of politeness strategies across the four major communicative functions of teachers: motivation, instruction, classroom management, and evaluation. Each function highlights how teachers strategically employ positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record

strategies to sustain rapport, ensure clarity, and maintain classroom harmony.

The model serves as a visual framework showing how teachers' language choices correspond to specific teaching techniques such as encouraging participation, providing instructional support, managing classroom behavior, and reinforcing performance. It reflects the integration of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness into the natural context of secondary classroom

interaction, where the teacher acts as the speaker and the students as the hearers.

Specifically, the model contextualizes politeness in the authentic classroom discourse of Malibud National High School, emphasizing how local teachers employ politeness not only to deliver content but also to nurture respect and cooperation among learners. The identified utterances and corresponding teaching functions in the model aim to guide teachers in choosing appropriate politeness strategies that align with their communicative purpose in each phase of the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, it offers practical implications for developing teacher-training modules on effective communication and classroom interaction.

4. DISCUSSION

Regarding the politeness strategies used by teachers in classroom interaction, positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record strategies were observed. However, their frequency and effectiveness varied across communicative functions. Findings revealed that these strategies were mainly used during instruction, when teachers presented and discussed the lessons. This is expected, as instruction accounts for the most significant portion of classroom time, requiring teachers to provide explanations, directions, and clarifications. In contrast, politeness strategies were used least during motivation, which is quite surprising as numerous studies emphasize the crucial role of motivation in sustaining student engagement and learning.

Evidence from this study suggests that teachers make use of politeness strategies even when they may not be consciously aware of doing so. Every utterance carries an element of politeness, whether through direct praise, softened directives, or indirect questioning. Teachers generally perceived positive politeness strategies such as giving compliments, using humor, and showing encouragement as the most appropriate and effective in all aspects of classroom interaction. However, from the students' perspective, a combination of positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald-on-record strategies proved to be highly effective in promoting clarity, respect, and engagement.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

This study concludes that teachers' use of politeness strategies plays a vital role in fostering effective and harmonious classroom interaction. Among the four identified strategies; positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record. positive politeness emerged as the most frequently and effectively used, reflecting teachers' efforts to build rapport, motivation, and cooperation among students. The integration of qualitative and quantitative results revealed that a combination of positive, negative, and bald-on-record strategies leads to clearer communication and stronger classroom relationships. Meanwhile, excessive use of off-record or overly indirect strategies may reduce clarity and hinder learning. Overall, the findings affirm that when teachers balance clarity with courtesy, instruction becomes not only informative but also relational and respectful, contributing to a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that teachers consciously integrate politeness strategies in their daily classroom communication to enhance student engagement and learning. Training and seminars on effective classroom discourse may be conducted to help teachers develop greater awareness of how their language choices influence student motivation, participation, and respect. School administrators and teacher educators are encouraged to include communicative competence and politeness strategies in professional development programs. Future researchers may also explore the relationship between politeness strategies and students' academic performance or extend the study to other grade levels and disciplines to further validate the proposed model.

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