

The Use of Politeness Strategies in Maintaining Unbiased Statements in El Clasico Match Commentary

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Abstract

The ability to maintain unbiased in football match commentary can be influenced by politeness strategies, which are a part of communication strategies. These strategies create a good relationship between the commentator and the audience, and also make the delivery of criticism or analysis more neutral and respectful. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research focusing on the effects of politeness strategies on objectivity in the sports domain, particularly in highly competitive matches or stressful situations, as previous studies examining politeness strategies have generally addressed the context of everyday communication. The reasearch aims to evaluate the effectiveness of politeness strategies in maintaining bias during commentary in football matches. This study used Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies theory and John C. Merrill's journalist ethical principles. This research used a descriptive qualitative method with data analysis of match commentary transcripts. The results showed that the application of politeness strategies can maintain the objectivity of statements made during football match comments because in politeness strategies there is an attitude of respect for both parties involved in communication and does not show partiality to any party and does not put pressure on anyone without reducing the quality of the analysis delivered.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a natural object that is a component of the human intellect, physically represented in the brain, and a part of the biological endowment of the species. In the latter half of the twentieth century, language is first studied using precise formal models that can capture certain fundamental facts about human language. A fundamental principle of language is that speakers are

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constantly confronted with expressions that they have never encountered in their previous linguistic experiences, nevertheless they can produce and comprehend them without any effort (Chomsky, 2002). Language enables individuals to engage in conversations in both formal and informal environments. The exchange of ideas, the discussion of issues, and the expression of emotions are all facilitated by language. Language is also of crucial significance in the transmission of messages, the expression of opinions, and the delivery of information to others. Communication is the act of conveying information to others.

Communication is contingent upon the comprehension of differences in information and discourse. This sets it apart from the mere observation of others' conduct. In comprehension, communication describes the difference between the value of the information and the reason behind its presentation (Luhmann, 2005). Pragmatics is necessary to comprehend the significance of language employed in communication.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics. Pragmatics is a study of the significance of language employed in communication. Pragmatics assists us in comprehending how individuals interact within specific social contexts, which includes the utilization of language to maintain relationships. The study of pragmatics encompasses the examination of communication strategies that are employed to demonstrate politeness.

Politeness is a critical component of communication that is essential for the preservation of social relationships between individuals. According to Watts (2003), politeness is not innate, but a skill that must be acquired and developed through socialization and instruction. Throughout history, there have been numerous educators and manuals on etiquette and "correct behavior" to assist in developing this capacity. Politeness is the conscious and considerate contemplation of the face of another individual, as stated by Yule (2010), as cited in Pardede et al. (2019). A theory of politeness should focus on the discursive struggle over politeness, which refers to how impolite behavior was evaluated and commented on by lay members. It should not be concerned with how social scientists elevate the term "(in) politeness" from the realm of everyday discourse to the status of a theoretical concept in what is frequently referred to as Politeness (Rahmawati et al., 2019). Characterised politeness as "a method of suppressing emotions and feelings in order to prevent conflicts." (Lakoff, 1973, Sifianou, 2022). Politeness is also employed in football match, particularly in statements made by football commentators.

Football is one of the most popular sports in the world, with a rich history and far-reaching influence. Not only is a football match a competitive

event, but it is also a social event that brings people from different backgrounds together. Football matches frequently produce intense emotions, including both positive and negative ones. Commentators should be capable of managing these emotions by employing considerate and polite language in order to improve the spectator experience (Holmes, 1995). Football matches are increasingly recognized in the world which makes various media make special broadcasts for Football matches. In a broadcast about a football match there are commentators who provide analysis, narration about what happened on the field.

Commentator serves as a link that conveys information and describes events that happen in the arena as stated by McQuail (2000). The study of match commentary is appropriate due to the significant role that football commentators play in the transmission of information and the development of an affective experience for the audience. This consists of pragmatics, the end of the pragmatic continuum closest to society and the world. Politeness is also employed in football match, particularly in statements made by football commentators.

Politeness strategies can assist journalists in avoiding the development of bad practices in their news reporting. Using politeness strategies, journalists may develop an environment that encourages more open and objective communication and maintain positive relationships with sources and audiences (Garces-Conejos & .Bou-Frach, 2004). Journalists can acquire more accurate and comprehensive data by demonstrating respect for the opinions of others and maintaining a polite attitude. This is crucial in order to minimize bias that may result from a limited perspective. When journalists demonstrate respect and courtesy, sources are more likely to provide a more detailed account of their perspectives, which aids in developing a more comprehensive and impartial viewpoint. Merrill (1975) underscores the significance of allowing all parties concerned in an issue to be heard in the context of journalism. In order to guarantee that no viewpoint is disregarded, news should incorporate a variety of viewpoints. By using politeness strategies in a communication this will help the commentator to be neutral and unbiased on either side. Especially for a match full of pressure and emotion like El Clasico.

El Claico is the match between the two Spanish soccer giants, Real Madrid CF and FC Barcelona (the classic in English). It is one of the most eagerly anticipated club football fixtures. The clásico is a global showcase of Spanish professional football, as shown by the excitement of fans, the media coverage, the merchandising, and the animosity between the two teams, which extends far beyond Spanish or European borders. The sporting accomplishments of Real Madrid CF and FC Barcelona are the primary factors

contributing to the clásico's popularity (Achille, 2023). The historical identity conflict between "Castilla and Catalunya, Spanishness and Catalanism, central nationalism and peripheral autonomy" is also conducted in the Clásico theater (Lopez, 2015). The origins of this identity crisis can be traced back to the regime of General Franco, which prohibited the public expression of Catalan identity. As a result of Franco's repression, the Camp Nou was transformed into a sanctuary, and FC Barcelona became the domestic and international symbol of the Catalan resistance (Ranachan, 2008; Maciel & Harrington, 2013). Subsequently, the clásico has become more than a conventional football match for both teams.

(Mahmud, 2019) is one of many that examines the application of politeness strategies in communication. In contrast to this study, which examines the use of politeness strategies in the context of sports, this study examines the use of politeness strategies during the learning process in the classroom. Next, is (Kuzhevskaya, 2019). This study employs the basic theory of Goffman (1955) and Brown & Levinson (1987) which is more focused on discussing politeness strategies. This research is significantly different from *The Use of Politeness Strategies in Maintaining Unbiased Statements in El Clasico Match Commentary* which uses the basic theory of Brown & Levinson (1987) to discuss politeness strategies and John C Merrill (1975) to discuss the ethical principles of journalists.

This study emphasizes a critical gap in the existing body of literature concerning the intersection of football culture and language use in commentary. While previous research has studied politeness strategies in a variety of contexts, it has been restricted to the manner in which politeness strategies are employed to maintain the unbiased of statements made by football match commentators. The results of this study are meant to serve as a manual for sports journalists and commentators to enhance the quality of their communication. They can be more effective in communicating information without showing favoritism by employing politeness strategies. This study aims to establish a fundamental framework for future research that analyzes the correlation between the use of politeness strategies and maintaining of unbiased in a statement by addressing this gap. Not only in the context of linguistic studies but also in developing effective communication skills in a broader sense. This study offers a perspective on the use of language to avoid bias by analyzing the manner in which commentators employ politeness strategies. This enhances comprehension of the manner in which linguistic decisions influence journalistic neutrality perceptions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research use qualitative descriptive methods to explore the use of politeness strategies in match commentary. By analyzing a collection of commentary transcript documents from Real Madrid vs Barcelona matches in 2011, 2013 and 2017, taken from LALIGA EA SPORTS youtube channel, and FCB Comps A.7i, this study aims to identify the pattern of politeness strategies usage and the use of politeness strategies in maintaining unbiased statements in El Clasico Match Commentary. Creswell (2016) defined that qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Consequently, the researchers implemented a qualitative methodology; they utilized commentary transcripts from previous El Clasico matches to accumulate data. The researcher conducted a comprehensive examination of the use of politeness strategies by soccer commentators to maintain the unbiased of the statements issued by the commentators of the El Clasico match.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the categories of politeness strategies employed by football match commentators to convey information and how these strategies are employed to maintain unbiased statement in a football match commentary. This observation has produced results amphasizing the advantages of employing politeness strategies to maintain unbiased statement in football match commentary. These insights provide valuable information regarding the effective implementation of politeness strategies and their impact on the objectivity of a football match commentator. The results of the observation data are summarized in the table below:

Table1: Observation results from LALIGA EA SPORT youtube channel videos and FCB Comps A.7i videos

No	Statement	Type of politeness strategies
1	<i>“The half time whistle goes, it has lived up to the billing iniesta givin Barcelona the lead then benzema witha brace and lionel messi toot it upon himself to inspire barcelona a record breaking on record making goal for him and a brilliant game half time is two are the same. well i don't think anyone of the 400 milion people around the globe will be dissapoited watch it that this match to meet living up its billing as the biggest club fixture in the world” (El Clasico Match, 2013)</i>	Positive Politeness
2	<i>“I don't think he needs to make that foul because it's still early but this is the game.” (El Clasico Match, 2017)</i>	Negative Politeness
3	<i>“You know they had chances to clear the ball they're not the best as they say from said players they can be caught out” (El Clasico Match, 2011)</i>	Off Record

4	<i>"He has committed a rash moment that is like throwing himself up (to be violated) My first thought were it was probably yellow but i think he's right because he does a kick so the referee took him out"</i> (El Clasico Match, 2017)	Baldly On Record
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Table 1 provides examples of sentence presentation of politeness strategies employed by football match commentators from the observation data. This analysis demonstrates the critical importance of a commentator's politeness strategies when conveying a comment. Positive politeness is one of the many types of politeness strategies employed. In this strategy, the commentator acknowledges the accomplishments of the two biggest clubs, Benzema and Messi, in the sentence. The commentator also employs negative politeness in his comments, as he employs neutral language and does not explicitly criticize the actions of Real Madrid player Sergio Ramos. Then, commentators employ the same type of politeness strategies that are employed off the record when communicating information that occurs on the pitch, as they do not explicitly criticize players. Finally, the commentator employs the "Bald on record" politeness, which involves expressing his observations based on the actual events on the pitch without suggesting any doubt.

The use of politeness strategies in maintaining unbiased statements

In addition to comprehending the various politeness strategies employed by football commentators during El Clasico matches. This research also concentrates on the use of politeness strategies in maintaining unbiased statements made by football commentators. The findings of this research will offer new knowledge into the effectiveness of employing politeness strategies to maintain unbiased in the statements that a football commentator is to deliver. The analysis of the statement of the use of positive politeness in defending unbiasedness in a comment is illustrated in excerpt 1:

"The half time whistle goes, it has lived up to the billing iniesta given Barcelona the lead then benzema with a brace and lionel messi took it upon himself to inspire barcelona a record breaking on record making goal for him and a brilliant game half time is two are the same. well i don't think anyone of the 400 million people around the globe will be disappointed watch it that this match to meet living up its billing as the biggest club fixture in the world" (LALIGA EA SPORTS, 2022)

The quote contains positive politeness, as the commentator is praising the players of both teams for their accomplishments in the phrase *"a record-breaking, record-making goal for him and a brilliant game."* The commentator's goal of creating a sense of togetherness in the audience or listeners is demonstrated by the phrase *"I don't think anyone of the 400 million people around the globe will be disappointed."* This sentiment is a characteristic of positive politeness, which points out the similarity and connection between the speaker and the listener(s). The second quote of the commentator that shows the use of politeness strategies is:

"I don't think he needs to make that foul because it's still early but this is the game." (FCB Comps A7i, 2020)

The use of negative politeness strategies is shown in this sentence by the phrase *"I don't think,"* which shows the commentator's effort to weaken his statement in order to avoid sounding too judgmental of the player and to show respect to listeners or audiences who may have differing opinions. The phrase *"it's still early"* additionally illustrates the commentator's attempt to remain neutral by refraining from imposing personal opinions. The phrase *"but this is the game"* at the end of the sentence indicates that the commentator accepts the complexity of the situation and does not appear to be making an absolute judgement. The third quote of the commentator that shows the use of politeness strategies is:

"You know they had chances to clear the ball they're not the best as they say from said players they can be caught out" (LALIGA EA SPORTS, 2022)

In this sentence the commentator uses off record politeness, because in the phrases *"they're not the best as they say"* and *"they can be caught out"* the commentator does not explicitly criticize a particular player. In these sentences the commentator is attempting to convey that there are flaws in the game's performance, but does not explicitly mention the player who is to blame for the

game. Then the phrase “*they had chances to clear the ball*” is also general in nature without pointing to a specific player and this leaves room for interpretation for the listener as off record politeness often employs such an approach to avoid statements that are too confrontational. The fourth quote of the commentator that show the use of politeness strategies is:

“He has committed a rash moment that is like throwing himself up (to be violated) My first thought were it was probably yellow but i think he’s right because he does a kick so the referee took him out” (FCB Comps A7i, 2020)

The commentator employs bald on record politeness in this sentence, as he provides criticism in the following phrases: “*He has committed a rash moment*” and “*he does a kick so the referee took him out.*” He does not employ hedging to reduce the impact of his statement. The commentator also explicitly says in these sentences that the player's actions were a mistake and that he supports the referee's decision. The commentator's sentence is also factual.

The study's analysis emphasizes the importance of politeness strategies to maintain unbiased in football match commentary. The previous instance highlights the importance of employing a various politeness strategies to ensure that information is conveyed objectively and that no partiality is displayed, even in high-pressure and tense situations like the El Clasico match.

Discussions

The research results emphasized several critical components of applying politeness strategies in a football match commentary. Commentators highlight the importance of employing politeness strategies to maintain neutrality when communicating information that happens on the pitch.

It is beneficial for football match commentators to implement politeness strategies in order to guarantee that the information they deliver is comprehensible to all, particularly audiences and listeners. Commentators also employ politeness strategies to maintain the ethical standards of journalists, one of which is impartiality towards any political party.

Positive Politeness

The use of positive politeness in this sentence aims to maintain unbiased as well as neutrality, as the commentator's praise of the players of

both teams is in accordance with the ethical principles of journalists, which include the obligation to be impartial., as stated "Journalists should strive to give voice to all parties involved in an issue." (Merril John C, 1975). While neutrally conveying information, positive politeness enables commentators to maintain a positive relationship with the audience. This approach offers the chance to appreciate both organizations or players without appearing to favour one over the other (Bhargava et al., 2022).

Negative Politeness

In the second quote commentators use negative politeness to show their independence from external influences, such as each of these organizations (Suyono & Andriyanti, 2021) The commentator's independence is crucial for maintaining a sense of objectivity and integrity in the communication of information, as outlined by John C. Merrill in his principles of journalistic ethics. Merrill asserts that "*Journalists must maintain independence from outside influences, including governments, companies, and interest groups.*" This independence is crucial for maintaining of objectivity and integrity in reporting.

Off Record

The sentences used by the commentator are also uses off record politeness to show that the commentator is very responsible with the information he conveys because by selecting the words he says, the commentator realizes that his opinion will impact the listener or audience. Journalists must be responsible for the news or information they convey, following the principle of journalist ethics "*Journalists are accountable for providing information that is beneficial to the public and must be aware of the influence of their reports.*"

Bald on record

The sentence is employed by the commentator to show that he conveys information by the events that occur on the pitch, and that he does not manipulate any information following the ethical principles of journalists. "*Journalists must be dedicated to the spread of the truth.*" This entails the conduct of comprehensive investigation and the accurate reporting of facts, without any distortion or manipulation of information. (Merril C. John, 1975).

The transcribed comments submitted by the commentators were analyzed to identify the types of politeness strategies employed in the comments and how they were implemented to maintain the unbiased nature of a statement. The consequence is that a significant number of commentators employ politeness strategies when delivering statements about the field in order to avoid subjective judgements that are perceived as excessive (Ryabova, 2015). The use of politeness strategies by commentators in a statement additionally shows their ability to express opinions in a rational and objective manner, rather than emotionally. The commentator's primary objective in a football commentary is to employ politeness strategies to guarantee that the audience, who are fans of the two clubs, can more easily accept the statements the commentator conveys without feeling attacked and can maintain an objective perspective in emotional situations, such as the El Clasico match.

This study proves the use of politeness strategies, including positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record politeness, and bald on-record politeness, can help a commentator maintain neutrality and unbiasedness in the transmission of information. Because commentators can create an atmosphere in which all parties feel appreciated by employing politeness strategies that minimizing coercion and being indirect to emphasize the negative face of the listener, while enhancing the positive face of the listener by demonstrating friendliness and politeness. Consequently, the audience will comprehend and approve the analysis results that the commentator communicates by keeping to the rules of politeness, minimizing coercion and being indirect to emphasize the negative face of the listener, while enhancing the positive face of the listener by demonstrating friendliness and politeness. This will enable the audience to concentrate more on the content of the information rather than the manner in which it is presented. This explains the use of both types of politeness strategies is very important for attacking commentators because the commentator as an analyzer will give praise to players who play well during the match as well as criticize players who play less well without cornering and showing favoritism on a particular side.

Based on around twenty sources of data that have been examined, the majority of politeness strategies employed by commentators are positive politeness and negative politeness. This is due to the fact that positive politeness is particularly effective in recognizing the abilities of players while they are on the field, without demonstrating any favoritism toward a particular player. Subsequently, many uses negative politeness strategies . This is due to the fact that when commentators wish to critique players or organizations, they employ subtle language to avoid themselves from making statements that are

too prejudicial. It is crucial to maintain the integrity and professionalism of the comment that is made.

This is also consistent with the principles of journalism. According to them, the initial principle of journalism is the impartial pursuit of the truth, which is the most significant element that separates it apart from all other forms of journalism. It is the unbiased truth that most distinguishes it from all other forms of communication. This statement demonstrates that correspondents, regardless of the media outlet, must maintain objectivity.

This is in accordance with the ethical principles that mandate that a journalist must report information factually and accurately. In order to maintaining the objectivity and integrity of information, journalists must also maintain their independence from external influences. Journalists must also maintain justice, they must provide a platform for all parties involved in an issue and refrain from taking a stance in favour of any group. Journalists are also required to exercise social responsibility, particularly in relation to the information they share. They must be aware of the potential benefits and the impact of the information they disseminate. Journalists are required to disclose their sources of information and the methods they employ to acquire news in order to build trust with their audience. Lastly, journalists are required to protect the privacy of individuals and only violate upon it when there is a pressing public interest that necessitates disclosure (Merril, C John, 1975).

CONCLUSION

It is imperative to employ politeness strategies in football match commentary in order to maintain neutrality and objectivity. This politeness strategy, which is based on Brown and Levinson's theory, enables commentators to maintain the "face" or self-image of athletes and teams, as well as respect for the audience. By employing positive politeness strategies, it is possible to maintain objectivity and establish positive relationships with the audience while also demonstrating appreciation for both parties. The utilization of negative politeness maintains the audience and participants' sense of respect, despite the criticism, thereby preventing the appearance of bias. Consequently, the utilization of off-the-record criticism, which implicitly criticizes, can avoid the appearance of taking a stance or isolating one party. Additionally, the term on bald record is employed to convey the actual events that transpired in the field. Merrill argues

that objectivity is the fundamental component of ethical communication, particularly in the context of journalism or information spread. This principle is relevant to football commentary because it enables commentators to communicate analysis without exhibiting favoritism towards specific teams or players through the use of politeness strategies. This approach maintains the emphasis on facts rather than subjective opinions. It is crucial to respect the audience's interpretation, as Merrill stated. Off-record or negative politeness are examples of politeness strategies that enable the audience to form their own conclusions without feeling influenced by the commentator's viewpoints.

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