

## A Pragmatic Analysis of Negative Politeness Strategies in D.H. Lawrence's *The Blind Man*

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### *Abstract*

*The paper offers a practical assessment of negative politeness techniques employed in 'The Blind Man', a short story by D.H. Lawrence. The research focuses on how language is utilized in the interactions between characters, with special attention given to the societal norms and power structures that are used in the story. The research reveals that the characters engage in negative politeness tactics, such as indirectness and hedging, to avoid offending while still communicating their intended message. Additionally, the analysis exposes that characters use negative politeness methods in diverse ways, with hedging emerging as the most prevalent tactic.*

*Keywords: face; pragmatics; negative politeness; strategies; tactics.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The concept of politeness turns around the idea of "face," which refers to the social value that a person claims for themselves through the impression that they leave on other people when they interact (Goffman, 1967). A person's emotional and social expression of their public identity that they want other people to be able to recognize is essentially their "face" (Yule, 2014). As a result, everyone feels the need to preserve their "face," or the need to have their public persona respected (Yule, 1996). The politeness principle has two objectives: to interact effectively with others and to create and sustain social connections.

Brown and Levinson (1987) classify "face" into two subcategories: negative face and positive face. They describe 'face' as "the public self-image that each member wants to claim for himself". The desire for independence, freedom of action, and the capacity to claim territories without intervention are all examples of negative face. Positive face, on the other hand, is the desire for a positive self-image or personality that is acknowledged and accepted by others. Essentially, Positive face-wants pertain to the want of individuals to have some of their wishes shared by others, whereas negative face-wants refer to the

desire of competent adults to have their acts unhindered (Roberts, 1992). In order to satisfy these face-wanting behaviors, these conceptions give rise to negative and positive politeness.

Negative politeness involves the methods used by speakers to reduce the likelihood of offending a listener's feelings, identity, or independence. The story presents various examples of negative politeness, in which the characters show respect to others while still achieving their objectives. The paper will conduct a thorough analysis of the text to recognize the different forms of negative politeness used by the characters and how these forms add to the overall significance and atmosphere of the story. Furthermore, the paper will address the contextual aspects that impact the utilization of negative politeness in the story and how these factors shape the characters' interactions. In summary, the article aims to conduct a practical investigation of the tactics of negative politeness utilized in D.H. Lawrence's 'The Blind Man'.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The research investigates the application of negative politeness tactics in D.H. Lawrence's "The Blind Man". Negative politeness is a language that is utilized to avoid threatening the listener's independence or face. It is a way of being polite by indicating consideration for the other person's negative face, which means their wish to not be hindered by others. In addition, the article studies the use of negative politeness techniques in Lawrence's "The Blind Man" short story and analyzes how the characters employ language to maintain their own face while also showing respect for the other person's negative face. The story revolves around two couples, one of whom is blind, and explores themes of disability, sexuality, and power dynamics.

The paper suggests that the story's characters utilize different negative politeness techniques, including being ambiguous, indirect, and hesitant in their language, in order to not damage the other person's self-esteem. The analysis reveals how these techniques are employed to sustain social harmony and avoid disagreement, while at the same time maintaining the individual identities of the characters.

In general, the article emphasizes the significance of negative politeness strategies for maintaining social connections and illustrates how these strategies can be utilized to manage power dynamics and exhibit consideration for others. By analyzing a literary work, the paper also indicates the significance of linguistic analysis in comprehending human conduct and social interactions.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study's motivation is limited to analyzing the use of negative politeness tactics that are worked out in D.H. Lawrence's 'The Blind Man'. Accordingly, there are some goals that need to be tracked. Including:

- i. Pinpointing and categorizing the negative politeness approaches employed by the story's characters, such as indirectness, hedging, and apologies.
- ii. Scrutinizing the context in which these tactics are used and how they help to mitigate potential face-threatening acts while maintaining social harmony.
- iii. Analyzing the effectiveness of the negative politeness strategies in achieving their intended communicative goals.
- iv. Discerning the relationship between negative politeness strategies and the story's themes, including empathy, communication breakdown, and social hierarchies.
- v. Furthermore, providing insight into the complex nature of communication and social interaction, particularly in situations where face-threatening acts are involved.

### **4. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The politeness theory, produced by Stephen Levinson and Penelope Brown in 1978, offers a framework for addressing offenses and face-threatening acts (FTAs). Brown and Levinson distinguish between positive and negative politeness, both of which aim to well-maintain or resolve threats to the addressee's face. The positive face refers to the addressee's perpetual desire for their wants to be esteemed, while the negative face denotes the addressee's desire for freedom of action and consideration without being restrained. Both types of politeness are considered regarded desirable, according to the theory (Ibid).

The scientific definition of 'politeness' has extended to include the expression of a speaker's inclination to address potentially face-threatening behaviors, as well as the use of social skills to nurture confidence in social situations. According to Mills (2003), politeness involves signaling a readiness to react to such risks. Another explanation of politeness is based on the idea that it entails the use of social skills to protect the dignity of others. In essence, being polite means taking steps to guarantee that everyone feels confident and respected in societal interactions.

The term "politeness" can be perceived as an alternative to the contrast between being polite and being impolite, and it is able to express a sense of respectability. Although it lacks an exact definition, politeness is distinctive of the language techniques it employs. Its purpose is to promote or sustain pleasant social interactions, achieved by showing concern for the preservation of another person's dignity (Culpeper, 1998). Essentially, the primary goal of politeness is to form an environment in which all parties in a conversation feel comfortable and at ease with each other (Hei, 2008). Lakoff's perspective is consistent with the idea that etiquette is recognized by sociocultural rules regarding language behavior (Pillai, 2008).

Before investigating the various objectives for which negative politeness elements are utilized in formal discourse, it is important to note that these elements are not exclusively employed to reduce the impact of a tangible face-threatening act on the addressee. In fact, some 'polite' remarks may have become so embedded in institutionalized language usage that, in line with Hoey's (2005) theory, they serve as operative discourse indicators that point out the approach of a potentially avoidable face threat. Formal utterances that express distance and respect actually serve a range of further purposes when bearing in mind the types of speech analyzed. These include demonstrating the responsiveness of discourse norms, enabling participants to confront one another in a suitable manner, and demonstrating the participant's ability to "manage it" (Mullany, 2002). It is accomplished by drawing attention to specific parts of the exchange before acting as a key component of the unpleasant move in the instance of fake politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested that negative politeness, which originated during the early stages of extensive study on politeness, is a form of polite conduct that appeals to the recipient's wish to have the independence to act and think without obstruction or interference, known as their negative face. Negative politeness aims to reduce the impact of the face-threatening act (FTA) and is essential to polite conduct. In contrast, positive politeness is the basis of familiar and teasing behavior. Unifying this view with Lakoff's (1975) research on women's speech and courtroom discourse, it has been suggested that three qualities of negative politeness are distinctive to the speech of those with a smaller amount of power.

However, there is a rising form of research on formal discourse that cautions against confusing official authority with interpersonal authority (Johnson 2002 and Mills 2003). While negative politeness practices may be related to a lack of influential power, quantitative research suggests that this is not always the case. Therefore, negative politeness tactics should be utilized for additional aims because having

social power and using casually deferential methods are not exchangeable.

As a result, being polite can alter into a tactic for getting away with it. This reverses Brown and Levinson's view that politeness allows for discourse between potentially unfriendly parties. Instead, politeness helps to distinguish between overt and covert communication. Ilie (2004) supported this reading by noting that verbal mitigation techniques are combined with intentional verbal violation to avoid formal sanction. In her 2002 analysis of discourse in the UK parliament, Christie examines diffident actions and challenges the notion that apologies are simply acts of politeness. She zoomed on the various functions that apologies serve in this context, including their use to augment the speaker's status, such as by favorably comparing the speaker's behavior.

Goffman (1967) noted that when engaging in hostile arguments, the person who emerges winner is the one who is able to present information that is beneficial to him but unfavorable to others. This individual is also capable of demonstrating proficiency in interacting with others. This serves as evidence of the importance of having self-centered motivation in such situations.

The use of politeness is a central feature of human language variation. By inspecting examples such as (Give me a cup of tea, boy!) and (If I could have some tea, please?) one can notice how they realize the same conversational aim but in different ways. It can be contended that this pragmatic variation in speech, such as in the usage of a request, arises from various contextual elements.

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed that when involved in a conversation, speakers wish to express their speech acts in a way that does not threaten the face of their debaters. These speech acts have two constituents, namely positive face, which refers to the speaker's desire for their debaters to share their aims and desires, and negative face, which is the speaker's aspiration for their actions to be unobstructed by others. Utterances that are observed as threatening by the listener are called face-threatening acts (FTAs). According to these two scholars, language usage is universal and the selection of linguistic expression in reaction to a threat is governed by three factors:

- i. (P) Indicating the level of power the listener embraces over the speaker.
- ii. (D) Relating to the social distance between the speaker and the listener.
- iii. (R) Stating the rank of the burden of the speech act.

The selection of a linguistic strategy is dependent on the importance of the threat involved. A four-part category of strategy adoption was emphasized by (Walker et al., 1997). When the threat is not very serious, the direct strategy is employed, and the speaker conveys his message in the most straightforward and explicit way possible. This strategy is normally used in serious situations, such as (Help! Help!), or when the face threat is minimal, like when the speaker informs the hearer, (Can you open the window), or when the speaker has authority over the hearer, (I was wondering if you had a chance to finish your homework today?) When the threat level is higher, the positive politeness approach is used, which stresses the need for the hearer to maintain a request form strategy as defined by Brown and Levinson.

The significance of explicitly self-centered stimulation is suggestive of Goffman's (1967) observation that in challenging interactions, the winner is able to present information that is beneficial to them and unfavorable to others, signifying their superior communicating capacities. Politeness is a vital element of the variety of human language. To demonstrate the difference in the pragmatic influence of realizing the same communicative objective, consider the following example: (Give me that book, chap!) or (If I could borrow that book, please?) One could claim that difference in context lead to a pragmatic variation of the same speech act, i.e., the request.

#### 4.1 Strategies of Negative Politeness

In line with Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness is viewed to be the crucial component of polite conduct, and it is more specific and targeted. Negative politeness consists of various tactics such as using indirect language, asking questions, using hedges, stating pessimism, mitigating the imposition, displaying deference, apologizing, using impersonal language for both the speaker and the hearer, maintaining the Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) by applying the common rule of nominalization, and making it clear that the hearer is not obligated to the speaker.

Flayyeh (2013), referring to Brown and Levinson's politeness approaches, observed that people are inclined to associate politeness with negative politeness strategies. Flayyeh proposes that negative politeness is connected to respectful behavior and procedures of averting, suggesting that the speaker distinguishes the hearer as more powerful and, as a result, must utilize an indirect and politely pessimistic tactic.

Negative politeness can be perceived as a technique to address a Face Threatening Act (FTA). To use this strategy, one must parallelize the demand to be direct with the need to avoid forcing the person being addressed. This paper will utilize the negative politeness

strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987). Since each strategy can be expressed in various tactics depending on the context, we will adapt their model to suit our analysis. The next discussion displays an account of each strategy and its corresponding tactics.

#### Strategy 1. Be indirect:

The tactic utilized by the addresser within this strategy is 'being conventionally indirect.' This strategy confirms that the addresser is confronted with opposing burdens. Conventional indirectness is employed to mitigate the burden shaped by the addresser's want to maintain the record and yet to give the addressee an 'out' by being conventionally indirect. The speaker utilizes this tactic to exhibit a compromise by employing language constructions with clear meanings in context. This indicates that the statement is recorded, and the speaker implies his intention to go off the record. According to Lores (1998), indirect speech acts are straightforward devices that provide traditional indirectness. The degree of politeness communicated through indirect speech acts can be modified by using hedging, indirectness, and particles such as 'please'. Accordingly, phrases like (would you give me a ride to work?), and (could you give me a ride to work, please?) show decreasing levels of politeness, compared with the direct imperative (give me a ride to work), being the least polite. ). Sometimes indirectness can embrace ambiguity, where an utterance is interpreted differently by different people due to their varying relationships and levels of shared knowledge. In discussing the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson, Flayih (Ibid) observed that negative politeness strategies are often associated with politeness. Negative politeness is based on the assumption that the listener has more authority than the speaker, and therefore the speaker must use indirect and polite language that involves protocols of escape and deference.. This is achieved through the use of the negative politeness tactic of being indirect and politely pessimistic.

#### Strategy 2. Avoid making assumptions or presumptions.

The strategy of avoiding making assumptions or presumptions is employed to avoid assuming that the listener wants or expects anything in a face-threatening situation. This is accomplished by hedging assumptions with words and phrases that modify the certainty of what is being said. For instance, saying (I don't want to assume anything, but... ), (Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that...), or (I'm not sure if this is what you're looking for, but...). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the main characteristic of this strategy is to avoid making assumptions, including assumptions about the listener. By doing so, the speaker retains a suitable distance from the listener and avoids presuming anything about the listener's wants, which is important to them, or which they should pay attention

to. This approach involves a variety of tactics that are employed by the addressee to skip the embarrassing situation by using hedges.

The use of hedging in interaction has been investigated widely by linguists. They have found that hedging can work for manifold purposes, such as helping with turn-taking, being polite, and moderating possible coercions to someone's self-image. Additionally, hedging can purposely convey ambiguity. Rosanti and Jaelani (2014), citing Lakoff (1972), regarded hedges as words that suggest ambiguousness and make things less clear. Lakoff correspondingly stated that words like 'rather', 'very', and 'in a manner of speaking' contain hedging power, which restricts how we can interpret language with hedging. Lakoff (Ibid) augments that hedging intermingles with the rules of conversation and felicity conditions for utterances. Therefore, understanding how to interpret hedges is conditioned by pragmatic aspects.

Willamova (2005) assumes that hedges are devices employed for showing linguistic politeness. Such devices allow the speaker to hide any negative opinions from the listener without exciting misgiving. Therefore, Willamova views hedges as a means of communicating linguistic politeness by lessening the burden of the message conveyed. Prominent expressions of hedges are (by any chance, by any means, kindly, maybe, please, and kindly). These expressions act as mitigating indicators, implicitly maintaining promises, expectations, and obligations. Hypothetical modal verbs like 'could, might, should, and would' are also applied to demonstrate hedges (Flayyeh, 2013).

Lakoff (1977) identified two classes of hedges:

i. Lexical hedges are demonstrated in the sentence (It's all kind of funny, isn't it?) The lexical hedge serves to mitigate the effect of the single adjectival item 'funny'. These kinds of hedges are frequently used to indicate a lack of confidence or indecision in the conversation. They can also be used to interconnect between different elements of the conversation, initiate a conversation, or have the conversation flow efficiently.

ii. Sentential hedges, displayed in the following sentence: (The solution is simple if you will), whereby adding the phrase 'if you will,' the speaker implies that the solution may not be as simple as it appears, or that there may be other reasons in effect. Correspondingly, the phrase 'so to speak' can be used to moderate a statement and suggest that the speaker is not speaking in factual terms. For example, (He's the king of his own little world, so to speak), suggests that while the person being defined may have some authority or influence, it is not meant to be understood completely seriously.



If the speaker uses sophisticated and vigilant language, such as saying (I wonder if he brings it here), it gives the impression a feature of a good-mannered statement. The speaker is endeavoring to lessen the burden of his request by wording it as a question. There are various ways to attain this. The followings are some words and phrases that can be used to make an utterance less direct and more careful. These include introductory verbs such as "seem," "tend," and "suggest," as well as certain lexical verbs like "believe," "assume," and "suggest." Moreover, modal adverbs like "possibly," "perhaps," and "conceivably" can also be used to achieve this effect.

According to Rosant and Jaelani (2014), the use of hedging is a significant feature of language because it lets for effective social communication by indicating the ability to express varying levels of confidence and utilize verbal strategies in conversation. Hedging embraces any linguistic devices employed to show vagueness or a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of a proposition. It can also be used to avoid making clear-cut statements. In line with this idea, Flayih (2013), citing Thorat (2000), observes that hedging is efficiently employed in language interaction to conceal some negative ideas in the presence of another party without allowing the latter to doubt anything. Wilamova (2005) introduces 'but-clauses' as a mitigating marker used to soften the burden of an utterance indicating a face-threatening act, for instance:

- The room has been painted but not in the colour that I asked for.
- I'd love to go to the cinema with you but not tonight.
- I know you love strawberries, but I should tell you it causes you an allergy.

The but-clauses above are maneuvering devices representing hedging, used as verbal defensive tactics which function to moderate encroachment; as disagreement in the first two sentences, and advice in the third one.

### Strategy 3. Don't coerce the hearer

As explained by (Brown and Levinson, 1987), this strategy is realized by a variety of devices, such as permitting the hearer to select whether or not to make a certain action or reducing any supposed threat by revealing the speaker's standpoint on Power, Distance, and Relation values. The speaker can also express a desire not to enforce on the hearer, and showing awareness and consideration for the hearer's negative face can be a way to achieve this. By taking these steps, the speaker wishes to evade coercing the hearer and satisfy his need for self-sufficiency and independence.

The devices above suggest that the hearer tries not to participate in the speaker's proposal in that he/she avoids responding to his wish and admitting his offer. In doing so, the speaker avails the opportunity to the hearer to select being pessimistic, to minimize any perceived imposition, or to show deference to the speaker. These three tactics can be used by the speaker to lessen the effect of the face-threatening act (FTA) on the hearer.

i. Being pessimistic

This approach is employed in conversations to highlight the speaker's hesitation about achieving a face-threatening act (FTA). It involves adopting a pessimistic attitude, which is reflected in indirect requests that suggest a possibility of refusal. For example:

- I don't suppose I could sing.
- Perhaps the team could do well in the match.

ii. Minimizing the imposition

The 'Minimizing the imposition' tactic is utilized by the speakers to suggest that the inherent urgency of the burden is not huge. It can be realized by some phrases that convey the idea of minimizing the latent risk to the hearer.

- Could you just do them without me?
- Could you just imagine all the attention you'd get?

iii. Giving deference

In conversations, participants usually attempt to show respect to each other. In other words, giving deference in the language implies displaying respect (Kuntsi, 2012). This is realized by using an honorific term which is a title that expresses a social status of admiration, consideration, or deference for status when used in speaking to a person. Honorifics can be titles prefixing the addressee's name, e.g. Mr, Miss, Lady, Lord, Dr. Deference, however, can also mean lowering one's standards for oneself, one's abilities, and one's assets.

- I'm embarrassed by my lack of awareness on this topic.
- I'm disappointed in myself for not finalizing the project on time.

However, in disagreement with Brown and Levinson, Ide (1989) contends that they misclassified language forms and verbal tactics by classifying 'honorifics' into the "give deference" category, one of the negative politeness techniques.

Strategy 4: Expressing the speaker's desire to avoid impinging on the listener

As suggested by Cano, Roca, and Sorri (2005), this strategy demonstrates that the speaker understands and respects the listener's desire to maintain their negative face, and is keen to cooperate by allowing some intrusion into their personal space. To achieve this, there are two primary tactics: apologizing for any embarrassment caused or indicating a willingness to abstain from imposing on the listener.

Apologizing is a social act intended to maintain a positive relationship between the speaker and the addressee. It is a form of polite conduct that considers the recipient's standing, both in everyday terms and in a more formal sense. According to Holmes (1990), an apology is an act of courteous behavior. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that when delivering a message that could potentially harm the recipient's face, one way to address their needs is for the speaker to apologize for the intrusion and recognize that she/he is aware of and takes into consideration the addressee's feelings.

Based on Brown and Levinson's Politeness model, apologies are classified as negative politeness techniques because they demonstrate respect, deference, and distance rather than friendliness and familiarity. Negative manners are an on-record avoidance tactic based on modesty and constraint (Wagner, 2009). When someone apologizes for a face-threatening act (FTA), she/he is indicating that they do not want to infringe upon the other person's negative face, which helps to repair the social damage caused by the FTA (Ogiermann, 2009). Brown and Levinson identify four apology approaches, as cited by Cano, Roca, and Sorri (2005).

i. Acknowledge the impingement.

- Although I realize this is boring, I must kindly seek your assistance.

ii. Show resistance

- I don't want to pry. It makes me uncomfortable to ask about this

iii. Provide a compelling argument. Here, the speaker makes strong arguments for carrying out the FTA, stressing that he would not normally even consider interfering with the hearer.

- It was simply impossible to finish this in the time available.

- Could you please help me? I've been quite busy recently.

iv. Request forgiveness:

- I apologize for my behaviour earlier. It was inappropriate and I regret it.

- Excuse me, but I must ask your forgiveness.

According to Tannen (1994), the strategy of self-criticism as a negative politeness technique involves taking responsibility to prevent implying that the recipient is to blame. Impersonalizing Speaker and Hearer is another technique employed to separate the speaker and the listener from a specific violation through impersonalization (Brown and Levinson 1987). Frequently, this entails leaving out the pronouns 'you and I'. The most popular strategies in English to avoid referencing agents involved in an FTA are passive and circumstantial voices (Lopes, 1999). 'I believe that' becomes 'it's believed'.

The plural form, on the other hand, could be employed to indicate impersonality as in 'We regret to inform you', serving to minimize an FTA by substituting indefinites for the pronouns "I" and "you" (Svaro, 2008).

- Such actions should not be taken.

Cano, Roca, and Sorri (2005) claim that another way to convey a Face Threatening Act (FTA) is by offering it as a social norm, whether it is a regulation or an obligation. By doing so, the speaker distances himself from the imposition and reminds the listener that a rule compels them to comply. For example, the speaker might say:

- For dinner tonight, soldiers must dress in pajamas (you must...)

- Passengers will please refrain from ... (you will)

In this manner, the speaker attempts to avoid appearing to impose while reminding the listener that a law requires or prohibits him from doing something.

#### Strategy 5: Nominalization

The way sentences are structured puts forward a continuing conversion from verbs to nouns rather than distinct word categories. Cano, Roca, and Sorri (Ibid) point out that nouns are typically found at the noun end of this continuum. By turning subjects into nouns, sentences become more formal and FTA (face-threatening acts) become less risky. Consequently, nominalization as a negative politeness technique encompasses using a noun form instead of a verb to moderate the influence of a negative statement. Consider the following examples:

- Instead of saying (You forgot to reply to my email), you can say (I haven't received a reply to my email yet), where 'reply' is nominalized as a noun.

- Instead of saying (You're talking too loudly) you can say (I'm having trouble concentrating with the noise level), where 'talking' is nominalized as 'noise level'.

- Instead of saying (You're interrupting me), you can say (I'd like to finish my thought before we discuss that further), where 'interrupting' is nominalized as 'discussing'.

#### Strategy 6: Address the listener's other wants

The above-mentioned writers suggest that one way to indicate negative politeness is to offer compensation or redress other wants of the listener after pledging a face-threatening act. In addition, the listener may wish to be treated with respect by the speaker and to acquire power, thus placing the speaker in his obligation, for instance:

- I know that you're busy and might not have time to help me, but would it be possible for you to give me a hand? I would be more than pleased to return the favor in the future.

#### Strategy 7: Making a commitment and assuming liability

This strategy refers to making a public statement or taking an action that binds oneself to a certain course of action, which may result in being indebted to an obligation to others. In other words, it denotes overtly stating a position or taking an action that may have consequences and may involve the person to achieve commitments or reimburse favors in the future. By blatantly expressing obligation to the hearer, a speaker can soften the FTA by this tactic. (Baresova, 2008). The following is an example of how this is expressed:

If you could, I would be incredibly thankful.

This example shows that a friend asks for a service and you agree to help, but you have to miss an important business meeting to do so. By agreeing to help, you are going on record and incurring debt to your friend, who may be more likely to help you in the future if you need it.

## 5. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

### 5.1 Methodology

The study employs both qualitative and quantitative research approaches to examine the utilization of negative politeness tactics in the literary work of D.H. Lawrence. It specifically applies pragmatic analysis to account for the language used by the characters of the story. This research locates on 'The Blind Man', with an emphasis on the language utilized by the characters within the text. More specifically, the investigation concentrates on the employment of negative politeness tactics such as indirectness, hedging, and vague language.

The methodology employed in this paper involves a close reading of the text, with a particular focus on the language used by the

characters. The analysis is informed by the principles of pragmatic linguistics, which examines language use in context and considers the social and cultural factors that shape communicative behavior. The paper identifies instances where the characters' interactions involve using negative politeness strategies and analyzes how these strategies are utilized to maintain social harmony and respect for the other person's negative face.

The paper also discusses the broader implications of the findings, including the importance of negative politeness strategies in maintaining social relationships, negotiating power dynamics, and preserving individual identities. The analysis focuses on the examination of what is meant and communicated by an addresser (a character), which can be used to save the face of an addressee (another character) in terms of conveying a sort of mitigation of a burden or an unfavorable act, by using a certain negative politeness strategy. In line with the above definitions, the investigation bears on the examination of language usage in both written and spoken forms. The analysis centralizes on examining the language employed in both written texts and spoken discourse. The study adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a table and a figure to demonstrate the occurrence of negative politeness strategies as utilized by the characters within the story. The paper ends with highlighting the implication of linguistic analysis in understanding human behavior and social communications and also proposes future research suggestions in this specific area.

## 5.2 Material

Negative politeness strategies are commonly used in communication to soften potentially face-threatening acts and reduce the risk of injuring the recipient's self-image. In this paper, we aim to conduct a pragmatic analysis of the tactics of negative politeness employed in D.H. Lawrence's *The Blind Man*. Specifically, we will focus on the text and ways in which those strategies are applied by the characters of the story to mitigate the threat to the addressees' face in social harmony. Through the analysis of the text, various negative politeness strategies that are employed by the characters will be illustrated, including indirectness, hedging, and apologies. Our analysis will provide insight into the nature of negative politeness strategies and their role in maintaining social relationships. Excerpts from the story are being analyzed, and under each text, a relevant discussion is involved to explicate the negative politeness strategies utilized.

Text 1

- Isabel: *“I know he wants to—he’d only be too glad. But what about you Maurice? “How would you like it?”*
- Maurice: *“I should like it.”*
- Isabel: *“Well—in that case—But I thought you didn’t care for him--”*
- Maurice: *“Oh, I don’t know. I might think differently of him now.”*

This conversation occurs when Isabel received a letter from Bertie, the family’s friend, addressing them to visit them and to express his real pain about the loss of sight of her husband, Maurice. In this conversational context, strategy 2 (Avoid making assumptions or presupposition – the use tactic of hedging) is implied in Isabel’s answer to Maurice “Well—in that case—But I thought you didn’t care for him-”, where the but-clause is used by Isabel to hide some negative idea. Maurice’s reply to her: “Oh, I don’t know. I might think differently of him now...” accounts for ambiguity in the sense that his answer was intricate to Isabel. Here is an indication of Strategy 1 (Indirectness).

Text 2

- Mrs. Wernham: *“Oh, is it **Madam!** Come in, then, come in! We’re at tea”*
- Isabel: *“No. I won’t come. **I’m afraid I interrupt your meal.**”*
- Mrs. Wernham: *“No—no—not likely, Madam, not likely.”*  
*“Hasn’t Mr. Pervin come in, do you know?”*  
*“I’m sure I couldn’t say! Missed him, have you, Madam?”*
- Isabel: *“No. I only wanted him to come in.”*

This conversation takes place while Isabel is on the farm, where the farm workers are seated around a long, narrow table enjoying tea. Mrs. Wernham, who was circling the seats with a teapot, was shortly

not aware of Isabel before recognizing her and turning abruptly to face her. In the first two chat sentences when Ms. Wernham asks Isabel to join them at the tea, Isabel tries to minimize the imposition of FTA on her reply by saying “I am afraid I interrupt you”; the strategy (Don’t coerce the hearer) is also realized when ‘giving deference’ tactic’ is used by Wernham as the honorific ‘Madam’, showing respect in addressing Isabel. In her answer to Wernham’s query about whether she missed her husband Maurice Pervin, Isabel’s reply “No, I only wanted him to come in” displays indirectness; she tries to be indirect and let the answer be vague, hence to soften the burden of expressing ‘missing’ as related to passion and ‘wanting’ as related to desire.

### Text 3

- Mrs. Wernham: *“Wanted him, did ye? Get you, boy- -get up, now.”*
- Isabel: *“Ah! No, don’t get up. I’m going myself.”*
- Mrs. Wernham: *“Don’t you go out of a dirty night like this. Let the lad go.  
Get along wi’ ye, boy.”*
- Isabel: *“No, no. Go on with your tea, Tom.  
**I’d like to go across**  
to the stable Mrs Wernham ”*

On the same occasion above, Wernham asked ‘Tom’, one of the farm boys to go out and check on Maurice for Isabel. However, Isabel insisted on leaving them alone. In her response to Wernham, Isabel gave a clear directive that needed to be followed, but she hid the negative face via an FTA, utilizing a hedging tactic, by using the modal verb ‘I’d like to go...’

### Text 4

- Maurice: *“He’s not here yet. I’ll go to change.”*
- Isabel: *“Maurice, you are not wishing he wouldn’t come, are you?”*
- Maurice: *“**I couldn’t quite say. I feel myself rather on the qui vive.**”*

Isabel and Maurice are talking about the coming of their friend Bertie. Maurice’s reply to his wife “I couldn’t quite say. I feel myself rather on the qui vive” represents a negative politeness tactic of hedging as he



was concealing a negative face concerning his reply to the coming of Bertie. This tactic expresses mitigating the burden of answering Isabel.

Text 5

- *Isabel:*            *"Is it you, Bertie? Have you come?"*
- *Bertie:*            *"Hello, Isabel! There are you."*
- *Isabel:*            *"Have you had a miserable drive? I'm  
sorry we couldn't send  
                              a closed carriage. I can't see you at all,  
you know."*
- *Bertie:*            *"I'm coming. No, I liked the drive- -it was  
like Perthshire.  
                              Well, how are you? You're looking fit as  
ever, as far as I can  
                              See." Oh, yes. I'm wonderfully well. How  
are you? Rather  
                              Thin, I think."*

The conversation above takes place when Bertie arrived at Maurice and Isabel's home, they had this dialogue. He was greeted by Isabel, who expressed her regret for not sending a closed carriage to transport him from the station to their home, causing his garments to get wet. She wants to keep Bertie calm and defuse the issue by using an apologetic expression "I'm sorry we couldn't send a closed carriage" as a tactic to keep Bertie on good terms. Bertie's reaction "No, I liked the drive," serves as a hedging strategy used to conceal his unfavorable opinion.

Text 6

- Isabel: *“Here you are, now. Come, let us eat.”*
- Bertie: *“How are you, Pervin?”*
- Maurice: *“Very fit. Glad you’ve come.”*
- Isabel: *“Come. Come to the table. Aren’t you awfully hungry?  
I am tremendously.”*
- Bertie: *“I’m afraid you waited for me.”*
- Isabel: *“No. We’re very little later than usual. We’re having a sort of  
High tea, not dinner. Do you mind? It gives us such a long  
Evening, uninterrupted.”*
- Bertie: *“I like it.”*

The three characters (Isabel, Bertie, and Maurice) had this conversation in the dining room. Isabel stared anxiously at Pervin (Maurice) and Bertie as she listened to their conversation as if she could not bear to look at them. Bertie apologized for being late “I’m afraid you waited for me”; this is used to communicate an FTA in order to satisfy Isabel’s negative face.

Text 7

- Bertie *“You will be glad when your child comes now, Isabel”*
- Isabel: *“Yes, I shall be glad. “So will you, Maurice? Won’t you?”*
- Maurice: *“Yes, I shall.”*
- Bertie: *“We are both looking forward so much to having it.”*

Bertie and Maurice continued their talking when the three were sitting by the fireplace playing poker, and Bertie asked Maurice how he bore the loss of sight. An instance of an impersonalization tactic may be seen in the conversation above when Isabel addressed her husband, Maurice, with the pronoun “we.”

Text 8

- Bertie: *“Isabel tells me that you have not suffered unbearably from the loss of sight.”*
- Maurice: *“No, not unbearably. Now and again one struggles against it, you know. But there are compensations.”*

The use of 'one' by Maurice in his answer to Bertie is another indication of employing the impersonalization tactic. This strategy is used by Maurice to avoid referencing himself as involved in the FTA in an attempt of sustaining social coherence and to keep confrontation at bay.

Text 9

- *Maurice: "Oh, I don't know. There's a good deal when you're not active."*
- *Bertie: "Is there? What, exactly? It always seems to me that then there is no thought and no action, there is nothing."*

Bertie, as in the short talk above, is giving elegant hedging as he tries to soften the conversation with Maurice by using the introductory verb 'seem'. On the same occasion above, Isabel and Bertie kept on talking when Maurice left them and went out to speak with Wernham. Bertie uses a language by which he can show respect and sympathy for Maurice.

Text 10

- *Bertie: "What is there?"*
- *Isabel: "I don't know—it's awfully hard to define it—but something strange in Maurice's presence—undefinable—but I couldn't do without it. I agree that it seems to put one's mind to sleep. But when we're alone I miss nothing, it seems awfully rich, almost splendid, you know."*

Isabel is expressing an FTA in a general sense, trying to distance herself from an impingement. Another illustration of a hedge is materialized when Bertie expresses an FTA to lessen the load that Isabel had in mind when she said, "but something strange in Maurice's presence—undefinable..." Yet, he keeps on being ambiguous using a hedge expression "I'm afraid I don't follow."

Text 11

- *Bertie: "I suppose we're all deficient somewhere."*
- *Isabel: "I suppose so."*  
*"Dammed sooner or later. I don't know."*  
*"I feel quite all right, you know. The child coming seems to make me indifferent to everything, just placid. I can't feel that there's anything, to trouble about, you know."*

Bertie and Isabel continued talking about Maurice. Bertie expressed an ambiguous attitude by saying 'I suppose' which indicates hedging. This is increased by the impersonalization tactic that he employed in using 'we' that helps in minimizing the FTA.

Text 12

- Bertie (*shy and stiff*): *"I hope I'm not in your way at all at the Grange here."*
- Maurice: *"In my way? No, Not a bit. I'm glad Isabel has somebody to talk to. I'm afraid it's I who am in the way. I know I'm not very lively company. Isabel's all right, don't you think? She's not unhappy, is she?"*
- Bertie: **"I don't think so."**
- Maurice: *"What does she say?"*
- Bertie: *"She says she's very content--only a little troubled about You."*
- Maurice: *"Why me"*
- Bertie: *"Perhaps afraid that you might brood."*
- Maurice: *"She needn't be afraid of that. What I am a bit afraid of is that she might find me a dead weight, always alone with me down here."*
- Bertie: **"I don't think you need think that."** (Bertie himself feared that Maurice's doubt was true).

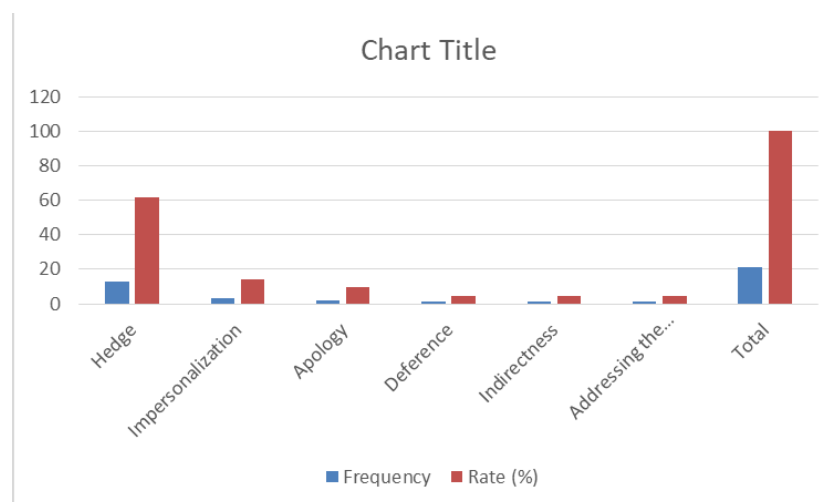
We notice from this conversation an instance of mitigating an FTA as Maurice tries to save the negative face of Bertie, saying that "I'm afraid it's I who am in the way". Maurice avoids assuming that he thinks doubtfully about Bertie. It indicates an instance of strategy two (Don't presume/assume.) Bertie's response to Maurice, "I don't think so," serves as an illustration of a hedge that is employed to lessen Maurice's uncertainty and ambiguity regarding Isabel's feelings for him. He intensifies the usage of the hedging strategy by responding to Maurice's question "why me" with the hedging word "perhaps". Bertie's reaction, "I don't think you need think that," amplifies the usage of the hedging technique by using it to communicate a vague message, trying to reinforce the social attitude among these three characters.

Twenty-one instances of negative politeness strategies are observed in the excerpts that were discussed in the twelve texts above. The results are illustrated in Table 1 and figure 1 below.

Table 1 Occurrence and rate of negative politeness strategies/ tactics in 'The Blind Man'

Negative Politeness Strategies/Tactics	Frequency	Rate (%)
Hedge	13	61.905
Impersonalization	3	14.285
Apology	2	9.524
Deference	1	4.762
Indirectness	1	4.762
Addressing the listener's other wants	1	4.762
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 1 Occurrence and rate of negative politeness strategies/tactics in 'The Blind Man'



## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of the strategies on negative politeness that are employed in the story are presented below:

### 6.1 Results

The analysis revealed that the characters in the story use a variety of negative politeness strategies to mitigate the potential threat to the addressee's face. These strategies include indirectness, hedging, and apologies. We found that the use of these strategies varies depending on the context and the characters' relationships. For instance, the character Bert uses indirectness and hedging more frequently when he is speaking to the blind man, whereas he uses more direct language when speaking to his wife, Alice. We also observed that the blind man, who is initially introduced as a potential threat to the characters' social harmony, uses negative politeness strategies to establish empathy and build rapport with Bert and Alice.

### 6.2 Discussion

The analysis highlights the effectiveness of negative politeness strategies in achieving their intended communicative goals. For example, Bert's use of hedging and indirectness when asking the blind man to leave his house reflects his concern for the blind man's feelings and his desire to maintain a positive social relationship. Similarly, the blind man's use of apologies and self-deprecating language when he accidentally spills coffee on Bert's shirt demonstrates his attempt to mitigate the potential threat to Bert's face and establish rapport.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed the relationship between negative politeness strategies and the themes of the story. For example, the breakdown in communication between Bert and Alice is reflected in their lack of use of negative politeness strategies when addressing each other. This highlights the importance of considering the context and the relationship between the interlocutors when choosing appropriate communication strategies.

On the whole, the study contributes to the understanding of the complex nature of communication and social interaction, particularly in situations where face-threatening acts are involved. Additionally, it sheds light on the literary techniques used by D.H. Lawrence in character development and plot advancement through the utilization of the approaches of negative politeness.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

To sum up, the pragmatic analysis of negative politeness strategies in D.H. Lawrence's 'The Blind Man' reveals the nature of interpersonal communication and social relations portrayed in the story. Employing the techniques of negative politeness by the characters reflects their awareness of social norms and power dynamics, and their efforts to maintain social harmony while expressing disagreement or disapproval. The research reveals that the application of linguistic expressions that indicate uncertainty or vagueness, such as hedges; indirectness, and question forms by the characters varies depending on their social status and power, highlighting the significance of the linguistic context in the interpretation of language use. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates the value of applying pragmatic analysis to literary works, as it provides insight into the restraints of communication and social relations that may not be evident from a purely linguistic or literary perspective. In summary, the study highlights the relevance of acknowledging the pragmatic elements in the interpretation of literary works, as they shed light on the complex means in which communication is leveraged to negotiate communal interactions and dominance relations.

The goal of negative politeness strategies is to protect the speaker's or hearer's negative face and hence mitigate the unfavorable effect of the face threatening act of the participants in conversational interactions. By employing negative politeness tactics, the speaker seeks to persuade the addressee that they are free to behave however they like without fear of losing face. Ultimately, the following concluding points can be presented as follows:

- i. It is clear that D.H. Lawrence used negative politeness strategies. Hedging, impersonalization, apologizing, indirectness, deference, and

don't presume/assume techniques are the ones utilized in *The Bind Man* in order of their frequency.

ii. The analysis and discussion of the negative politeness strategies utilized in the story indicate the dominance of using the hedging strategy as a politeness negative tactic by D.H Lawrence's characters.

iii. Impersonalization and apology tactics were adopted in certain situations to soften the atmosphere of the conversations among Isabel, Maurice, and Bertie.

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Journal of Namibian Studies, 33 S1(2023): 195–218 ISSN: 2197-5523 (online)

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