POLITENESS STRATEGIES ON INSTAGRAM:
A CYBERPRAGMATICS PERSPECTIVE

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Abstrak: *Penelitian ini dilakukan guna menemukan tipe-tipe strategi kesantunan yang tercermin dalam fitur komentar dari para pengguna Instagram. Penelitian ini merupakan sebuah studi deskriptif kualitatif dengan sumber data berupa ujaran-ujaran para pengguna Instagram yang saling berinteraksi pada fitur komentar di sebuah akun resmi Instagram, yakni akun resmi WHO. Dalam penilitian ini, data yang digunakan difokuskan pada data-data yang mengulas topik virus Corona-19, yang merupakan salah satu topik yang saat ini sedang hangat dibicarakan oleh masyarakat di seluruh belahan dunia. Pembatasan pemilihan data ini dilakukan karena beragamnya topik yang diulas dan dibicarakan oleh para pengguna Instagram. Data-data yang telah diperoleh kemudian dianalisis berdasarkan teori starategi kesantunan yang diusulkan oleh Brown dan Levinson (1987) serta dianalisis dalam kerangka studi cyber-pragmatik. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keempat strategi kesantunan yang diusulkan oleh Brown dan Levinson (1987) yakni (1) strategi langsung atau tanpa strategi, (2) kesantunan positif, (3) kesantunan negatif, (4) strategi tidak langsung atau tersamar ditemukan dalam ujaran-ujaran para pengguna Instagram yang berinteraksi melalui fitur komentar pada akun Instagram resmi WHO.*

Kata kunci: Cyber-pragmatik, Instagram, strategi kesantunan

Introduction

In the era of modern technology, nothing seems to be a boundary to communications across nations. People can easily communicate with others though separated by distance and beyond physical barriers through cyber world or what we call as the internet-mediated interaction. The development of technologies and the internet results in various social media or social networking sites (SNSs) exist that allow people to communicate and interact with others comfortably without concerning the limitation of conventional interaction, such as time and space. Boyds & Ellison (in Yus, 2011:111) define social networking sites (SNSs) as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi- public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Yus (2011:111) also adds that SNSs offer a user-friendly interface for interaction, uploading content, and other kinds of social interactions. Nowadays, people spend much of their time for social interaction via SNSs or social media. One of the most famous social media exists these days is Instagram. It is a photo and video sharing social networking sites created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010. In Instagram people can share photo or video as well as interact with other by giving likes, comments, or chatting via the direct messages service

provided. Instagram also becomes a social media where people can share information, news, or current issues happening in the world.

In every type of interactions, both conventional communication and internet-mediated interaction, politeness is considered compulsory to achieve the goal of the communication and preserve social bonding with others. As stated by Yus (2011:256), politeness is common and important in internet-mediated communication and it is typically called as *netiquette* (from internet/net and etiquette). However, interaction conducted via internet-mediated communication or SNSs including Instagram still can be challenging. Unlike the conventional communication, verbal communication or face-to-face interaction, which supported by physical setting, i.e. a speaker has available to him the full range of voice quality (intonation, facial expression, postural and gestural system) as stated by Brown and Yule (1988:4), the internet-mediated communication is lack of physical co-presence and contextual support which can lead to a lack of self-control and parallel lack of linguistic markers of politeness (Yus, 2011:262). This study is conducted in order to find out the types of politeness strategies used by people interacting via Instagram in the comments section as well as the way the attitude is communicated.

Material and Methods

This research is a qualitative-descriptive study. Qualitative method in a research produces descriptive data in the form of word related to meaning, value and definition (Kaelan, 2005:5). Sudaryanto (1993) defines descriptive method as a method used in a research which based on fact. In this study, the data are utterances taken from the comment sections of the World Health Organization (WHO) official account, which is a verified Instagram account. The data was collected by documentary method, in which the photos or videos shared by the account as well as the comments given by the Instagram users were captured and transcribed. Due to the various topics discussed in Instagram, the data taken for this study was limited to the covid-19 pandemic issues, which is one of the most recent issues faced by the world. The utterances or comments taken for this study were also limited to some of the most recent photos or videos or contents uploaded by the account. The data taken then analyzed based on the politeness strategies theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) as well as the way the attitude of the speakers is communicated by using the framework of cyberpragmatics study due to the nature of internet-mediated communication which lacks of contextual support and physical co-presence.

Result and Discussion

In this section, the data obtained were presented in the form of table as well as discussed and analyzed based on the theory used.

Result

Based on the data collected, the four politeness strategies were found in the utterances uttered by people interacting on the WHO Instagram's official account. Some of those utterances were classified and presented in the following table.

Table 3.1. Politeness Strategies and Attitude of Communication Found in WHO Instagram's official account.

No	Data	Types of Politeness Strategies	Attitude of communication
1	(1-1) "Need help in India"	Bald on Record	Syntactically
2	(1-2) "INDIA NEED HELP, THE SECOND WAVE COVID - 19 IN INDIA IS WORSE THAN EVER STILL ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WITH THE MOST COVID CASES AND PEOPLE ARE DYING OVER 200,000, THERE IS ONE DEATH EVERY FIVE MINUTES. India needs help 🙏"	Bald on Record	Syntactically and Nonverbally
3	(1-3) "Don't force vaccines"	Bald on Record	Syntactically
4	(1-4) "We urge you to take a look at the current situation in India, it's a war crime. You need to ACT!!!"	Bald on Record	Syntactically
5	(1-5) "Help Brazil🙌🙌🙌"	Bald on Record	Syntactically and nonverbally
6	(2-1) "Definitely vaccine brings us one step closer 👏👏 hope is just that it reaches to the needy ones ..🙏🙏🙏"	Positive Politeness	Syntactically and nonverbally
7	(2-2) **"Thank you to our former president and WARP Speed!"**	Positive Politeness	Syntactically
8	(2-3) **"Hope things get better for everyone struggling with COVID rn."**	Positive politeness	Lexically
9	(2-4) "♡□😍😍🙌"	Positive politeness	Nonverbally
10	(2-5) **"Thank you for your great work to support those on the COVID-19 front-lines, from the children and women of West Bengal @seeschool_org ♡□IN🙏"**	Positive politeness	Syntactically and nonverbally
11	(3-1) "Please help India!"	Negative politeness	Symnactically

12	(3-2) "Can you help ImanaCharity_org raise £50000 to Help India breathe. India Covid-19: Deadly second wave spreads from cities to small towns. Please donate to their JustGiving Page no amount is small please share to help India: https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/imana-charity?utm_id=102&utm_term=2qJnMZMM8"	Negative Politeness	Syntactically
13	(4-1) "BUT NOW Covid-19 coronavirus cases over 150 millions"	Off Record	Syntactically
14	(4-2) "The covid vaccine will definitely end the pandemic, That's true. But I think I'd rather end the covid pandemic by not killing everyone. Idk maybe it's just me"	Off Record	Lexically
15	(4-3) **"If vaccination works why people in india are dying very badly"**	Off Record	Syntactically

Discussion

In this section, the data obtained from the WHO's Instagram official account were discussed and analyzed based on theory of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). In addition, the utterances found will be also analyzed based on the attitude of communication used by the speakers in accordance to Yus (2011) classification on attitude of communication on internet.

Bald on Record Strategy

Bald on record strategy is one of the politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) which is defined as the most direct way of saying something. There are some utterances in the comments section of WHO's Instagram official account that classified using this strategy, as presented in the following discussion.

Data (1-1), (1-2), (1-3), and (1-4) were taken from WHO's official post in which it posted a picture along with a caption promoting how vaccine could help the world to end the Covid-19 pandemic in order to persuade people to take the vaccine to help decreasing the spread of Covid-19 virus. In response to this post, many Instagram's users reacted to the post by giving likes or leaving comments. In the comments sections various comments were found such has been presented in data (1-1), (1-2), (1-3), and (1-4). These data were considered using bald on record strategy. In order to determine the strategy used in those utterance, the very first step needed to be taken is, of course, determining the speaker's force that she or he wanted to deliver by paying attention to the context of situation surrounding the utterance. In order to determine the intention of the speaker in an internet-mediated communication, the interlocutor have to

search a corresponding information beyond the utterance as well as to understand the attitude of communication used by the speaker through the internet-mediated communication. According to Yus (2011:153), the attitude of communication that being communicated via internet can be expressed in three different ways, namely (1) syntactically, by using verbal mood, (2) lexically, and (3) non-verbally.

In data (1-1), (1-2), and (1-4), the users were all mentioning a certain condition that was happening in India and urging the WHO to do something about it. In order to understand the speakers' intention, the interlocutor or even the third participants reading the comments, need to search for background information outside the conversation. Without that, it is impossible to interpret what the speakers were trying to convey. By searching information outside the conversation, it is understood that the three users were talking about the covid-19 pandemic wave that currently happened in India, in which many lives were lost. Through Instagram the users tried to urge WHO to help the society as well as Indian government to solve the problem they are facing. Haverkate (in Yus, 2011:274) states that bald on record strategy is usually used in these situations (1) there is a power relationship between the speaker and the hearer, (2) the speaker is feeling angry or unpleased at the hearer's behaviour, (3) there is an urgency that require the hearer to react immediately. By looking at the message the speakers tried to convey in data (1-1), (1-2) and (1-3), the use of bald on record strategy in their utterance was on the basis of the urgent matter that was happening in India. This reason enables them to use this strategy though there is no power relationship between the speaker and the addressee. The use of bald on record strategy in data (1-1), (1-2), (1-3) and (1-4) were all signified by their linguistics realization, those are the use of imperative and straightforward assertive command or request.

As been aforementioned above, aside from seeking background information beyond the utterance, the urgency of the message can also be conveyed through the attitude of communication used by the speaker. In data (1-2) and (1-4), in addition to syntactically communicated the message, the speaker also expressed their attitude non-verbally, in which in data (1-2) the speaker chose to use capital letter and emojis, and in data (1-4) the speaker used capital letters as well as exclamation mark by the end of his or her utterance to emphasize the message.

Positive Politeness Strategy

Data (2-1) to (2-5) in the table above are the utterances considered using positive politeness strategy. Those data were taken from the comment section of a picture posted by

WHO's Instagram official account along with a caption of promoting Covid-19 vaccine and encouraging people around the globe to take them. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that this strategy is directed to the interlocutor's positive face. Yule (2011) adds this strategy is based on the expression of appreciation and understanding towards the interlocutor's idea and wishes as well as showing that both share them. In data (2-1) and (2-4), the speaker showed that he or she shared the same idea or agree to WHO's point of view regarding the Covid-19 vaccine. Therefore, this utterance can be classified using positive politeness strategy. Data (2-2) and (2-5) were both showed that the speaker expressed appreciation towards the interlocutor, in this case WHO, by thanking their interlocutor. In other words, data (2-2) and (2-5) fitted the criteria of the use of positive politeness strategy. In addition, in data (2-3), the speaker used the *noticing or attending the addressee* sub strategy to express his or her wish for everyone suffering from Covid-19 pandemic. These all five utterances were all considered using positive politeness strategy.

In terms of attitude of communication shared by the speakers through their utterance, data (2-1) and (2-5) used two ways namely syntactically and nonverbally marked by the use of emojis as well as bold word to emphasize the message delivered. Data (2-2) expressed the attitude syntactically marked by the use of bold words. Data (2-3) delivered the attitude of communication lexically by the use of assumption schemas *I hope that.* In addition, data (2-4) also only used one way to express the attitude of communication, namely nonverbally marked by the use of emojis to show agreement.

Negative Politeness Strategy

Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that negative politeness strategy is the strategy that is used in order to fulfil the negative face wants of the interlocutor. Yus (2011:275) adds that negative politeness is aimed to make clear that the FTA is not imposing the interlocutor's freedom or opinion. In WHO's official account, some utterances in comment sections were found using this strategy, yet only two were presented in the above table. In both data (3-1) and (3-2) the users' utterances were aimed to request for help. Data (3-1) used the *showing deference* sub strategy marked by the use of politeness markers *help* while data (3-2) used the *being pessimistic* sub strategy by using interrogative mode with modal *can* to express request. In terms of attitude of communication, both of the data used one way namely syntactically marked by the use of verbal mood.

Off Record Strategy

Off record strategy is done in such a way that a speaker intentionally leaves a number of interpretations in his or her utterance that there is no possibility to attribute only one clear intention to the utterance (Brown and Levinson, 1987:216). In other words, by using this strategy, the speaker tries to conceal the true intention under the utterance and leaves the responsibility for the act to the hearer (Yus, 2011:275). Three utterances considered using this strategy found in WHO's Instagram official account were presented in the table above. In data (4-1), by stating his or her utterance, the speaker tried to express his or her disagreement. However, instead of expressing it directly, the speaker uttered an utterance which implied a contradiction to WHO's caption and vaccine's promotion. By doing so, the speaker is considered using off record strategy, especially the presuppose sub-strategy. In terms of attitude of communication delivered, in data (4-1) the speaker expressed his or her attitude syntactically emphasized by the use of capital letters for word *But* and *Now*.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the four types of politeness strategies were found in utterances uttered by people interacting via comment sections of Instagram. Though, internet-mediated communication lacks of contextual supports, unlike face-to-face interaction, people are able to express their attitude communication syntactically, lexically or non-verbally. Based on the analysis conducted, it can also be concluded that the three ways of expressing attitude of communication were found in people's utterances in Instagram.

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