

Understanding the Politeness Strategies of Mia Thermopolis in The Princess Diaries Movie

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the politeness strategies employed by Mia Thermopolis in *The Princess Diaries*, aiming to understand how these strategies reflect identity, social norms, and role adaptation. Grounded in Goffman's Face Theory and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, the research addresses the problem that communication involves more than information exchange; it sustains relationships and social harmony. Using a qualitative content research design, the sample comprised the full movie transcript (1 hour 51 minutes), analysed through purposive sampling of Mia's interactions. Data were collected by reviewing the film and transcript, then coded using Brown and Levinson's framework and examined through thematic analysis. Findings reveal that Mia uses all four politeness strategies, with a shift from directness to more nuanced strategies as her role evolves. Sociolinguistic variables such as power and distance strongly influence her choices, while her American upbringing initially favours bluntness before royal training introduces tact. These results suggest that identity development and context jointly shape pragmatic behaviour. The study implies that politeness theory is still useful for analysing media discourse and recommends future research to integrate multiple communication modes and cross-cultural comparisons for deeper insights.

Keywords: Politeness strategies, facework, Brown & Levinson, sociolinguistics, film discourse, *The Princess Diaries*.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication is not merely a vehicle for transferring information; it is the primary means by which people build, sustain, and repair relationships in everyday life. Relationship maintenance work, which is often performed through daily talk, ritual expressions, and small pragmatic moves, stabilises commitment and reduces friction. Moreover, communication, which extends beyond transactional exchanges, builds trust through openness and responsiveness. Existing literature show that maintenance behaviours are fundamental to relational quality and evolve with context and goals (Ogolsky & Stafford, 2023). In tandem with this, pragmatics highlights that meaning is shaped by context rather than words alone, influencing how speakers choose to be direct, soften their language, or express attitude (Hu & Zhou, 2024).

Movies, in turn, replicate and stylise such real-life human exchanges, offering a rich, accessible corpus for analysing pragmatic phenomena. Previous research on films show that Brown and Levinson's framework works well for analysing screen dialogue, as it explains how characters handle power, maintain relationships, and manage conflicts while moving the story forward and shaping audience understanding (Fitria, 2024; Putri, 2022). Accordingly, *The Princess Diaries*, a coming-of-age narrative in which Mia Thermopolis grows from an ordinary teen to a princess, provides a good opportunity to study how a character's evolving identity affects her use of politeness strategies.

Evidently, relationship maintenance calls for more than just the mere transfer of information. Good communication should be able foster trust, solve problems and demonstrate a willingness for long-time

commitment. In the meantime, movies often reflect real social situations making them a great tool to help us learn language in its natural context. This study will, considering the above two aspects, trace the shifts in Mia's politeness strategies as she develops from an ordinary girl into a princess.

Problem Statement

Communication is not merely a sharing or passing of information. Instead, it is communication that arranges social connectivity and maintains human relationships. Although few people notice the unspoken rules that seem to guide interactional expressions such as requests, refusals or gratitude in differing contexts, studies such as Ogolsky & Stafford's (2023) have shown that these language use in context support closeness and stability in relationships. The study of pragmatics then, looks at how meaning depends on how language is used, focusing on aspects of meaning that rely on context, rather than just the logical and grammatical structures of sentences (Umeh et al, 2024). It is concerned with the practice of carefully choosing words while considering their social implications, rather than just their literal meanings. For speakers, overlooking these contextual considerations may lead to unintentionally offending the listeners, and over time, little misunderstandings can lead to strained relationships.

As important as it is, studying pragmatics, or in particular politeness strategies, is difficult in real life as natural human interactions are unpredictable. Conversational intentions are often unclear, and factors such as social distance and power change constantly. These rapid changes during interactions complicate systematic observation. Evidence shows that communication quality fluctuates between partners over time and across topics, as it all depends on contexts (Johnson et al., 2022). Researchers found it hard to separate strategy choices from short-term pressures or personal goals. Therefore, studies in the field require situations where interaction factors are clear but interactions remain spontaneous, to ensure that interpretations are not based on guesswork.

A film dialogue, although scripted, provide controlled yet realistic scenarios where intentions, roles, and outcomes can be observed. Research has shown that instruction using curated movie and TV clips can improve learners' performance on speech acts such as making requests and suggestions (Omar & Razi, 2022). However, previous studies on films often looked at politeness strategies in scenes without considering how character development may influence a character's choices of these strategies throughout the movie (Julianti & Rahmani, 2024; Putri, 2022). Hence, we lack research that tracks changing strategies at key points, which is important for understanding identity change, status learning, and relationship repair together.

In summary, everyday talk plays an important role in maintaining harmony, but this is often overlooked. Researchers also face challenges from the complexity of real interactions and the limits of short clip-based studies. This creates a clear gap, showing a need for detailed analyses that follow one character's changing politeness strategies across key events. This study addresses that gap by examining Mia Thermopolis's development and how her growth shapes her strategy choices, offering a rich account that links social norms, situational pressures, and character change.

Research Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine how Mia Thermopolis employs politeness strategies in *The Princess Diaries* and to understand the factors influencing her choices as her life and identity change. This research aims to explore the types of strategies she uses, the sociolinguistic variables shaping these choices, and the role of her background in her pragmatic behaviour.

Research Questions:

1. What types of politeness strategies are utilised by Mia Thermopolis when interacting with the other characters in *The Princess Diaries*?
2. How do sociolinguistic variables influence Mia Thermopolis' choice of politeness strategies used in different situations in *The Princess Diaries*?
3. How do Mia Thermopolis' background and upbringing influence her understanding and practice of politeness strategies in *The Princess Diaries*?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of “face” was first introduced by Erving Goffman (1955) in his work on face-work, which describes how individuals maintain their social image during interactions. Brown and Levinson (1987) later expanded on this idea, developing a comprehensive politeness theory that explains how speakers use language strategically to reduce face-threatening acts (FTAs). According to Goffman, ‘face’ refers to the social value individuals want others to acknowledge, and protecting it is essential to maintain smooth social interactions. Building on this, Brown and Levinson distinguished between ‘positive face’ – the desire for approval, and ‘negative face’ – the desire for autonomy. This model identifies four main strategies for minimising threats to ‘face’: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. These theories remain highly relevant in pragmatics, as they highlight the link between language choices, social norms, and relational goals (Kalso, 2023; Dewi et al., 2021)

Both theories have been widely applied in studies examining politeness in both real and fictional contexts. Research on cinematic discourse shows that politeness strategies often reflect real-world social norms and can be valuable tools for teaching pragmatic competence (Omar & Razi, 2022). For instance, analyses of films such as *Joker* and *Turning Red* reveal that factors like social distance and power dynamics strongly influence strategy selection, reinforcing the relevance of these theories in media studies (Asheva, 2022; Zahro & Candraloka, 2025). However, most of these focus on the isolated moments of dialogues rather than the evolving use of politeness strategies as characters develop over time. Previous research on *The Princess Diaries* has identified different strategy types but has rarely explored how Mia’s shift from an ordinary teenager to royalty shapes her pragmatic choices (Himawati et al., 2022). This highlights the need for an approach that links politeness strategies to identity transformation by examining the narrative as a whole. Such an approach not only enriches pragmatic theory and media discourse analysis but also illustrates how language adapts to changing social roles. Ultimately, this perspective sheds light on the intricate relationship between linguistic choices, social expectations, and personal growth.

The discussion of Goffman’s face theory and Brown and Levinson’s politeness framework highlight the close connection between identity management and linguistic strategies. Both theories stress on the inherently social nature of communication, and their use in media discourse opens up new ways of examining pragmatic patterns. While past studies have shown the value of these models in categorising politeness strategies, they also reveal certain gaps, particularly the tendency to focus on isolated dialogues rather than the progression of a character’s language over time. This points to a need for research that combines theoretical perspectives a broader, narrative-level analysis of language use in fictional contexts. In this study, exploring Mia Thermopoils’ changing politeness strategies provides a way to address these gaps and to better understand how shifts in identity shape pragmatic choices.

Politeness Strategies Across Discourses

A recent study examines the politeness strategies in the 2024 Indonesian presidential debates using Brown and Levinson’s framework. Taking a qualitative pragmatic approach, the researchers analysed verbatim transcripts of candidate interactions. Findings showed that positive politeness was most prevalent, especially strategies aimed at fostering solidarity and inclusivity (Mulyono et al., 2025). Another study focused on online classrooms, revealing that both instructors and students relied on a mix of positive and negative politeness to maintain rapport in a virtual setting (Valdellon & Cuarte, 2024). Although these studies demonstrate how context shapes politeness, both are lacking in fully capturing the dynamic, evolving nature of interactions.

Cross-cultural research on speech acts shows that politeness strategies vary across different societies. One comparative study of intercultural communication found that digital platforms tend to promote more direct communication, leading to fewer mitigating strategies than those typically used in face-to-face interactions (Keith, 2025). Similarly, Hu and Zhou (2024) used Systematic Functional Grammar to explore politeness in interpersonal discourse, demonstrating how choices in modality and mood reflect underlying social hierarchies. While these studies highlight the flexibility of politeness strategies, they often focus on isolated interactions, leaving gaps in our understanding of how these strategies can change over time.

Sociolinguistic Variables and Politeness

Research on sociolinguistic factors reveals that power and social distance significantly influence politeness choices. Al-Natour et al. (2024) studied classroom interactions in Jordan using qualitative observation and audio recordings. The study found that professors preferred positive politeness to reduce distance and encourage participation. Similarly, Yuwono and Santoso (2024) examined address forms in multicultural university settings, finding that gender, age, and status shaped politeness strategies. Another review by Kulsawang and Ambele (2024) confirmed that cultural norms and social roles strongly affect requests and apologies. These findings highlight the complexity of politeness, which goes beyond context-specific speech.

Further evidence comes from research on African speech communities, where politeness principles varied by age, gender, and education level. Ngondombo (2021) analysed interactions in the Lingombe society and found that younger speakers used more direct strategies, while elders preferred indirectness to maintain harmony. Similarly, Teibowei (2024) highlighted gender-based differences in language use, linking them to broader sociocultural norms. These studies affirm the role of sociolinguistic variables in shaping politeness but rarely explore how these factors interact with personal identity changes, leaving a gap relevant to character-based analyses in media.

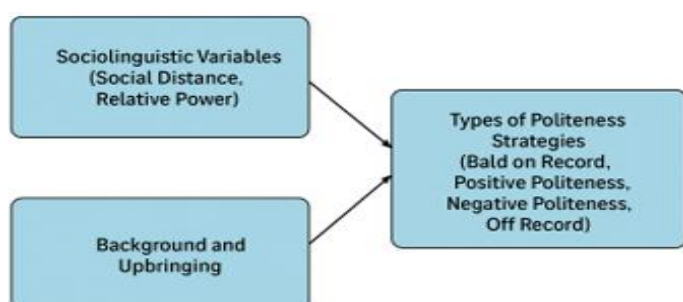
Politeness in Film and Character Development

Several studies have analysed politeness strategies in films, focusing on static dialogue rather than character growth. Julianti and Rahmani (2024) examined the main character in *Wonder*, identifying positive politeness as the most frequent strategy. Similarly, Putri (2022) analysed *Yes Day* and found bald-on-record strategies dominated family interactions. Firda (2024) studied *Luca*, reporting that social distance and payoff influenced positive politeness choices. While these studies confirm the applicability of Brown and Levinson’s theory in media, they do not address how evolving roles or identity shifts affect pragmatic behaviour across a narrative.

Recent research on *Turning Red* explored politeness strategies of a secondary character, linking assertive strategies to family dynamics (Zahro & Candraloka, 2025). Another study on *Peaky Blinders* combined socio-pragmatic analysis with gender and occupation variables, finding that power hierarchies drove bald-on-record usage (Narayana et al., 2024). These findings suggest that politeness reflects both situational and relational factors. However, most studies treat character behaviour as fixed, without considering developmental arcs. This limitation highlights the need for research that tracks politeness strategies alongside character transformation, as in the case of Mia Thermopolis.

The review of past studies reveals recurring patterns in how politeness strategies adapt to context, sociolinguistic variables, and media discourse. Across discourses, researchers consistently note that power, distance, and cultural norms shape language choices. However, most studies remain confined to static or context-specific observations. Similarly, film-based analyses confirm the relevance of Brown and Levinson’s framework but rarely track character development over time. These limitations point to methodological gaps, particularly the lack of longitudinal analysis within narrative contexts. Addressing this gap is crucial because character growth often mirrors real-life identity shifts, influencing pragmatic behaviour. Therefore, the present study addresses these challenges by examining Mia Thermopolis’s evolving politeness strategies, offering insights into the convergence of language, identity, and social roles.

Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the main variables guiding this research. At the core, the dependent variable is the types of politeness strategies employed by Mia Thermopolis, which include Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off Record. These strategies are shaped by two major influencing factors: sociolinguistic variables (such as social distance and relative power) and background and upbringing. The arrows in the diagram indicate directional influence, showing that both sociolinguistic context and personal background contribute to Mia's pragmatic choices. This framework reflects insights from Goffman's face theory and Brown and Levinson's politeness model, as well as findings from past studies that emphasize the interplay between social norms, identity, and language use.

The framework suggests that Mia's politeness strategies are not random but shaped by situational and personal factors. Sociolinguistic variables determine the degree of formality and deference, while her upbringing influences her preference for directness or mitigation. This aligns with the research aim: to analyse how these factors interact to shape Mia's evolving politeness strategies throughout *The Princess Diaries*.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative content research design, which focuses on interpreting meaning within social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research goes for deeper rather than broader analysis, which makes it possible for researchers to study occurrences or cases in their natural settings, looking at complex patterns of interaction (Williams, 2024). Studies in language and linguistics often employ a qualitative design as it focuses on contexts and the participants' perspectives (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). Thus, this design is most appropriate to examine in detail how Mia Thermopolis' dialogues may reveal her politeness strategies.

Content analysis is applied to the movie script of *The Princess Diaries*, an approach often used to discover implicit messages, values, social cues, and other deeper insights within texts, including media scripts (Rucks-Ahidiana, 2024). Mia's speeches are systematically coded based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies to identify patterns and changes in her language use. The complete transcript of the movie (duration: 1h 51m) provides a comprehensive background to the narrative. Analyses of full movie scripts have been undertaken in previous studies in politeness (e.g., Putri, 2022; Fitria, 2024) as they provide the contexts for interpretation.

Next, purposive sampling is employed by selecting the scenes where Mia interacts with other characters. This helps focus on the parts of the movie that is most significant to the study. Purposive sampling is common in qualitative studies because it focuses on instances that are most relevant to the research aim (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). In the case of this research, coding of data is limited to Mia's dialogues to make it easier to analyse her politeness strategies over the course of the movie, while the scenes and dialogues by other characters provide overall understanding of the narrative and situational contexts.

The instrument for this study is Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), used as the coding scheme to categorise Mia's utterances into four strategies: Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off Record. The same framework has been used in previous studies such as Fitria (2024) on *Encanto* and Zahro and Candraloka (2025) on *Turning Red*, to analyse pragmatic behaviour in films. The coding scheme ensures that Mia's utterances are categorised consistently, to identify possible shift in her politeness strategies.

To collect data, the movie is viewed carefully, accompanied by the methodical reading of the script. This process simulates similar research by Putri (2022) and Firda (2024) who combined watching the movie and analysing the text for accuracy and context. The downloaded transcript is reviewed, noting the lines that involved Mia. These lines were then checked against actual scenes in the movie before her utterances were categorised according to the coding scheme. This approach ensures that only valid and contextually relevant utterances are included, to enable a reliable examination of politeness strategies in Mia's interactions.

This study employed peer debriefing and inter-coder agreement to ensure reliability. This involved an experienced qualitative researcher who reviewed the coding decisions to minimize bias and ensure interpretations were guided by data (McLeod, 2024). For inter-coder agreement, two coders independently applied Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy codes to a subset of Mia's dialogues, resolving any differences

through discussion and refining the codes. This process improved coding consistency and reduced bias in interpretation, ensuring a systematic and credible analysis (Halpin, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analyses taken from the movie *The Princess Diaries* that illustrates the politeness strategies employed by the main character Mia Thermopolis. The analysis was conducted based on the selected scenes that best showcase the strategies used by Mia and also how the sociolinguistics variables and her upbringing influence her choices. Understanding these factors will provide better understanding on human’s communication adaptability in order to meet social roles and expectations. The Brown and Levinson politeness theory is used as the coding scheme.

Mia Thermopolis’ Politeness Strategies

RQ1: What types of politeness strategies are utilised by Mia Thermopolis when interacting with the other characters in *The Princess Diaries*?

Category	Code	Timestamp	Example text
Bald on Record (BOR)	BOR1	00:13:10	“No.”
	BOR2	00:15:41	“I don’t want to be a princess!”
	BOR3	00:16:50	“Living with a mother who lied to me for 15 years scares me.”
Positive Politeness (PP)	PP1	00:11:27	“You’ve got a great place.”
	PP2	01:02:46	“Do you want a bite of this?”
	PP3	01:09:27	“I have to go, but thank you so much.”
Negative Politeness (NP)	NP1	00:08:33	“All right, I’ll... I’ll go.”
	NP2	00:14:21	“Why on earth would you pick me to be your princess?”
	NP3	00:36:41	“Sorry, I can’t do it today.”
Off Record (OR)	OR1	00:17:34	“Just in case I’m not enough of a freak already, let’s add a tiara!”
	OR2	00:15:31	“I’m still waiting for normal body parts to arrive.”
	OR3	00:59:46	“Fun? You’re not busy for something like that?”

Table 1. Examples of Mia’s politeness strategies (coded instances)

Table 1 shows the analysed utterances coded with Brown and Levinson’s strategies and subcodes (BOR1–BOR3; PP1–PP3; NP1–NP3; OR1–OR3). The data comprise timestamped lines taken from the full movie transcript and verified against the film’s audio. Overall, Mia’s speech uses all four main strategies, showing more directness at the start, and more politeness adjustments as the story develops. Her direct refusals and statements reflect Bald on Record, while compliments, offers, hedges, and apologies show Positive and Negative Politeness. Overall, she moves from direct honesty to more considerate and tactful speech, indicating growing awareness of social expectations and roles.

The findings of RQ1 indicates range and development, as Mia’s utterances shift from blunt refusals to mitigation, consideration and humour. This pattern adds to and refines earlier film studies. For instance, Encanto emphasised positive politeness within a family discourse, while Yes Day showed frequent bald-on-record requests in lively domestic scenes (Fitria, 2024; Putri, 2022). The differences suggest that genre and relational stakes influence strategy choice. Moreover, the mixed presence of hedges, gratitude, offers, and apologies supports research on context-sensitive language (Kulsawang & Ambele, 2024). Finally, the growing variety of Mia’s utterances shows progress in managing her social identity without losing clarity. Her style shifts from bluntness to tact as she grows into her role as a princess, balancing directness with considerations when needed.

Sociolinguistics Variables Influencing Mia Thermopolis’ Politeness Strategies

RQ2. How do sociolinguistic variables influence Mia Thermopolis’ choice of politeness strategies used in different situations in The Princess Diaries?

Dyad / Situation	Social Distance	Relative Power	Code	Timestamp	Example text
Mia → Helen (mother)	Low	Helen > Mia	NP1	00:08:33	“All right, I’ll... I’ll go.”
Mia → Queen Clarisse (first meetings)	High (initial)	Queen > Mia	NP2	00:14:21	“Why on earth would you pick me to be your princess?”
Mia → Queen Clarisse (later)	Lowering	Queen > Mia	PP2	01:02:46	“Do you want a bite of this?”
Mia → Lilly (best friend)	Low	≈ Equal	NP3	00:36:41	“Sorry, I can’t do it today.”

Table 2. Politeness strategy by sociolinguistic context

Table 2 displays examples grouped by relationship context, with social distance and relative power noted for each case. The analysed utterances show that lower distance with intimates (e.g., Helen, Lilly) coincides with hedging and apologies, whereas higher or formal power (e.g., Queen Clarisse, early scenes) elicits deference and indirect questions. As Mia’s relationship with the Queen warms, her strategies soften from respectful questioning toward friendly offers, signalling reduced distance. With her mother, hesitating compliance shows Mia’s respect for parental authority despite their closeness. With Lilly, apologies help maintain their closeness while acknowledging that their plans have been disrupted. In short, shifts in distance and power align with predictable strategy choices. Therefore, the findings support a context-sensitive pragmatics in which role, rank, and familiarity contour Mia’s linguistic expressions.

The findings of RQ2 reiterates context-sensitive language use. The data show that politeness strategy choice depends on social distance and relative power. It can be seen that Mia uses direct language with Queen Clarisse but relies on hedges and short apologies with Helen and Lilly. These findings match studies showing that politeness shifts with gender, age, and status in multicultural settings (Yuwono & Santoso, 2024), and with classroom research in Jordan, where instructors used positive politeness to reduce distance and encourage participation (Al-Natour et al., 2024). Film analyses also confirm that politeness strategies shift with the contexts

of the scenes (Asheva, 2022). Overall, it can be seen that changes in distance and power can result in changes in politeness, as the closer or less powerful Mia feels, the more she softens her speech to manage social risk.

Background and Upbringing Factors Shaping Mia Thermopolis’ Politeness Strategies

RQ3. How do background and upbringing shape Mia’s understanding and practice of politeness?

Phase	Pragmatic tendency	Code	Timestamp	Example text
Pre-training / teen baseline	Direct assertion	BOR2	00:15:41	“I don’t want to be a princess!”
Early adjustment	Hesitating compliance	NP1	00:08:33	“All right, I’ll... I’ll go.”
Post-training / emerging tact	Offer of inclusion	PP2	01:02:46	“Do you want a bite of this?”
Post-training / courtesy routine	Gratitude	PP3	01:09:27	“I have to go, but thank you so much.”

Table 3. Background/upbringing and developmental trajectory

Table 3 summarises utterances arranged along the narrative timeline to reflect development from a direct, informal upbringing toward more calibrated speech after training. Early scenes show Mia’s preference for Bald-on-Record assertions consistent with the norms of a plain-spoken American teen. Towards the middle of the film, Mia uses cautious language that temper her commitment while keeping her independence. Later, she adds Positive Politeness through offers and thanks, signalling attentiveness to ceremonial roles and her considerations of other people. The observed sequential development from BOR to NP and PP marks Mia’s growing sensitivity to face. Thus, the findings imply that upbringing provides a basic foundation, while royal socialisation broadens her practical skills and ensures that she matches royal decorum.

The findings of RQ3 demonstrates that Mia’s American, informal upbringing supplies a baseline of blunt utterances, but socialisation (training and role learning) refines her pragmatics, while not entirely erasing her authentic self. This pattern aligns with research showing that language choices reflect social hierarchy and that politeness is shaped by institutional roles (Hu & Zhou, 2024). It also supports findings that cultural norms and social distance influence requests and apologies, and that training or immersion can shift these preferences over time (Kulsawang & Ambele, 2024). Similar film studies note that characters often maintain positive politeness as they develop caring relationships, which parallels Mia’s attentiveness in the later part of the movie (Julianti & Rahmani, 2024). Thus, it can be said that socialisation refines but does not remove directness, as Mia learns to combine clarity with formality, blending American openness with royal etiquette.

CONCLUSION

Across the film, Mia Thermopolis deploys all four main politeness strategies, with her choices shifting as her role identity settles and relationships change. Strategy choice is reliably predicted by sociolinguistic variables—distance and power—and refined by socialisation or role training. Mia’s story illustrates a pragmatic path from blunt honesty to careful considerations, keeping authenticity while promoting harmony and togetherness. In terms of theory, the case confirms the durability and adaptability of facework models; in terms of practice, it supplies definitive guidance for teaching, writing, and leadership during transitions.

The findings carry theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings show that politeness depends on context, where distance, power, and role learning shape strategy choice. They also support combining interpersonal meanings (such as mood, modality, offers, apologies) with facework in one framework (Hu & Zhou, 2024). Moreover, the shift from directness to careful adjustments also reflect evidence that cultural norms

and social distance systematically affect requests and apologies across settings (Kulsawang & Ambele, 2024). Practically, the results offer guidance for teaching pragmatics (e.g., linking strategies to relationships), for scriptwriting that tracks character growth through language, and for leadership or etiquette training during role transitions. Consequently, Mia's journey illustrates how explicit attention to face needs can maintain relationships while retaining speaker authenticity, a balance that audiences and learners can recognise and reuse.

Future work should refine methods, practice, and theory. Methodologically, researchers could adopt planned inter-coder agreement on a stratified subset and report thresholds and resolution steps to strengthen reliability in qualitative coding (Halpin, 2024). Likewise, studies should follow transparent, values-aligned reporting with reflexive notes and audit trails to enhance credibility (Braun & Clarke, 2024). Practically, researchers can expand to multimodal evidence (intonation, gaze), compare genres and cultures, and triangulate film audio with scripts and subtitles to test robustness. Theoretically, longitudinal, narrative-level models that blend Brown-and-Levinson pragmatics with interpersonal resources (e.g., stance) can capture how identity change and power recalibration co-drive politeness. In short, advancing design quality and multimodal scope will clarify when directness helps, when mitigation heals, and why character growth sounds the way it does.

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Appendix: Coding Guidelines

Category	Code
Bald on Record (BOR)	BOR1 (bare refusal/command)
	BOR2 (explicit stance/claim)
	BOR3 (direct evaluative assertion)
Positive Politeness (PP)	PP1 (compliments/approbation)
	PP2 (offers/inclusion)
	PP3 (gratitude/solidarity moves)
Negative Politeness (NP)	NP1 (hedges/hesitation)
	NP2 (conventional indirectness/questioning)
	NP3 (apologies)
Off Record (OR)	OR1 (sarcasm/irony)
	OR2 (jokes)
	OR3 (hints/implicature)