

## Politeness Strategies of Requests in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy Season 2*

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of politeness strategies of requests in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2. The request strategies were classified based on the politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The results showed that out of the 274 requests found in the TV series, 132 requests (48.18%) were expressed using the bald on-record strategy, 108 occurrences (39.42%) using the negative politeness strategy, 25 occurrences (9.12%) using the positive politeness strategy, and nine occurrences (3.28%) using the off-record politeness strategy. For power, the characters of *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2 tend to speak to their interlocutors depending on the power that they have between them. Meanwhile, as for the social distance, the speakers tend to ignore the differences in power that exist between them. The familiarity between the speakers and interlocutors influences them to use direct strategies despite the differences in power.

**Keywords:** *request strategies, politeness strategies, power, social distance, Grey's Anatomy.*

### INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in communication, in which people make daily conversations with others. According to Chaer and Agustina (1995), people can express their feelings, emotions, opinions, ideas, and so on through language. When people communicate with one another, they want it to go well. It is due to a desire to maintain a positive or close relationship with others. In communication, language is used as a communication tool to establish a relationship with other people. Communicating can be done by requesting or refusing a request.

Searle (1996, p. 66) stated that a request is a directive form that is aimed at getting the hearer to do something, which is regarded as an attempt to get

the hearer to do an act which the speaker wants the hearer to do. For instance, when someone says "Pass me the ketchup, please!", the speaker is making a request to the hearer to pass the ketchup. By making a request, the speaker expects that the hearer can interpret and carry out a certain action. However, the hearer may carry out or reject what is requested of the speaker as an interpreter of this speech act.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), politeness in language studies shows how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationships. Politeness is a basic manner that people should know because it indicates who people are. Additionally, politeness indicates that people show respect to their interlocutors.

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed a theory that is widely known and remains relevant as a universal theory of politeness. Brown and Levinson's theory introduced five main politeness strategies: Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off Record. The focus of this study is to explore the use of politeness strategies by the main characters in the TV series *Grey's Anatomy*.

This research addresses two research questions: a) what politeness strategies of requests are used by the characters in the TV series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2? b) how do power and social distance affect the use of politeness strategies of requests by the characters in the TV series?"

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decade, a number of studies have been conducted on politeness strategies. Charismawati (2013), for example, investigated the positive and negative politeness strategies of refusals in three American drama movies. She identified and classified the positive and negative politeness strategies in the movies using negative and positive politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The results showed that out of the 73 refusals used in the movies, 32 (43.8%) were expressed using positive politeness strategies and 41 (56.2%) using negative politeness strategies. The most frequently used politeness strategy is positive politeness strategy #13 (give or ask for a reason), with 7 (21.8%) strategies.

Lailia (2019) examined the initiating acts as well as the positive and negative politeness strategies of refusals in the TV Series *Modern Family* Season 1. In this research, Lailia also used the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The result showed that there were 126 refusals found in the *Modern Family* TV Series Season 1. The most frequently found initiating acts of refusals in the TV Series were found with 69 (54.8%) occurrences. The results also showed that 98 refusals were expressed using positive and negative politeness strategies.

Another research by Kurniawan (2015) examined politeness strategies by Russell Peters in his *Red, White, and Brown* stand-up comedy show. The data used in this research were bits or jokes which attacked or involved the audience during the

show. The theory used in the research was Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies (1987). The results of this research showed that Russell Peters used four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson. In this research, Kurniawan found 11 (7.2%) bald on-record strategies, 97 (63.4%) positive politeness strategies, 18 (11.8%) negative politeness strategies, and 27 (17.6%) off-record strategies.

Muftarizqi (2015) also studied politeness strategies. She investigated a movie entitled *Bel Ami*. This research focused on the politeness strategies used by George as the main character. She identified and categorized the politeness strategies that were used in the film and identified the most frequently used politeness strategies by upper-class characters. She also used Brown and Levinson's classification of politeness strategies. According to the findings of the study, there are 61 speech acts found that include politeness strategies.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Context

Cutting (2002, p. 3) identifies three types of contexts: situational context, background knowledge context, and co-textual context. Situational context refers to where the situation is taking place. Interpersonal knowledge refers to what the speaker and the hearer know about each other that makes them familiar. Co-textual context refers to when both of the people who are involved in the conversation know about what they are discussing.

### Speech Acts

Austin (1962, p. 12) defines speech acts as performance in saying something. He states that there are three ways contrasted among the kinds of acts that are performed, which are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

Locutionary act is the act of speaking when the speaker says the literal meaning of the words. An illocutionary act is the act of speaking with clear purposes. Meanwhile, a perlocutionary act is the response or reaction from the hearer after the speaker says something.

## Request

Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) established a cross-linguistic scale of directness based on request strategy taxonomy. Theoretically, requesting strategies can be classified as direct, conventional indirect, or non-conventional indirect.

The direct request strategy is the most direct and explicit level request strategy. The use of this strategy is usually marked with the use of imperatives. Conventionally indirect request strategy actualizes the act of request by making reference to the contextual preconditions required for the performance of the act. The last one is non-conventionally indirect, which is the act of asking a request by using contextual hints/clues.

## Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) believed that each person has two types of faces or wishes: positive face and negative face. The wish to be liked, approved of, valued, and admired by others is reflected in the positive face, while the desire to be free to behave as one wishes is reflected in the negative face.

A politeness strategy is when speakers attempt to minimize the threat and choose a particular method for structuring their communicative contributions based on the result of the calculation. When speakers are faced with the possibility of performing a face-threatening act (FTA), their calculations lead to a decision that results in five potential communication options to minimize the threat. Brown and Levinson (1987) divided politeness strategies into four main types: bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off record.

### *Bald on-record*

Say something as it is. Bald on record means that the speaker expresses their intention in the most direct, clear, and unambiguous ways possible. This strategy is most commonly used in the urgency or efficiency situation or when the speaker has a close relationship with the hearer.

### *Positive Politeness*

This strategy is used to avoid offending the hearer by emphasizing friendliness by shortening the distance between the speaker and the hearer. This strategy is done to make the hearer feel good about themselves.

### *Negative Politeness*

This strategy is oriented toward the hearer's negative face and emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the hearer. This strategy is usually expressed through questions to emphasize the distance between the speaker and the hearer.

### *Off-record*

This is an indirect strategy since it involves violating conversational norms in order to demonstrate/utter the sentences.

## Power and Social Distance

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 76) politeness theory, speakers vary their strategies depending on three social variables: power, social distance, and rank of imposition. These social variables are factors that affect the seriousness of FTA and define the degree of politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 76) stated that power is when the speaker has a higher social standing in relation to the hearer, the less likely it is that she or he will need to employ strategies to minimize the possibility of FTA.

Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 83) stated that social distance can be defined as the degree to which interlocutors are acquainted.

In social distance, even though the power between interlocutors is high, their social distance relationship may be close because there may be a friendship between the boss and his/her subordinate or because the interlocutors might belong to members of the same family.

## METHODS

### Data Source

There were two data sources used in this research. The first one as the primary data source is the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2, which consists of 27 episodes. Episodes of the TV series were accessed via Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar as the official platforms. These data sources were used to obtain the data in the form of politeness strategies expressions that were uttered by the characters of the TV Series.

To enrich the understanding of the dialogues, we also used secondary data sources, that is, the subtitles of the series, which were accessed from the subtitling website Subscene (<https://subscene.com/>).

### Method of Data Collection

The data used in this research were request strategies found in the TV series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2. The procedures for the data collection are presented below.

1. Watching each episode of the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2 from Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar while reading the subtitle simultaneously.
2. After acquiring a thorough understanding of the story and the context of the dialogues, we identified the request utterances made by the characters of the TV series and then copied the dialogues in a separate place, then marking the dialogues that contain politeness strategies of request.
3. Using the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) to analyze the data collected in terms of their politeness strategies.
4. Analyzing the impact of power and social distance.

### Method of Data Analysis

After collecting all of the data, they were then classified based on the politeness strategies employed by the characters in their request utterances, as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). After being analyzed, the data were then classified according to

the politeness strategies and sub-strategies used in the data found.

1. In analyzing the data, the researcher classified the data that was collected based on the types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and request strategies based on Blum-Kulka and Olshstain (1984).
2. After all the data were analyzed, the researcher decided on the types of politeness strategies of request performed the most by the characters of *Grey's Anatomy* season 2.
3. After that, the researcher analyzed the impact of power and distance based on the use of politeness strategies involved in performing the speech act of request by the characters of *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2.
4. The last step is drawing a conclusion of the result after all the data are classified and analyzed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Politeness Strategies in Request

Table 1 below shows that the most frequent politeness strategy found in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2 is the bald on-record strategy (48.18%). This strategy is performed the most because the characters of the TV series are surgeons who need to talk as fast and directly as possible to avoid misunderstanding and also to save lives.

Table 1. The frequency of politeness strategies of requests found in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* season 2

No.	Politeness Strategy	Token	%
1.	Bald On-Record	132	48.18
2.	Positive Politeness	25	9.12
3.	Negative Politeness	108	39.42
4.	Off-Record	9	3.28
<b>Total</b>		<b>274</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Meanwhile, the least frequently used politeness strategy is the off-record strategy (3.28). This happens because the off-record strategy is indirect and is usually uttered using clues or hints.

The characters of the TV series tend to avoid the use of this strategy to minimize the indirectness when speaking with their interlocutors.

The following discussion below are the examples of the use of each politeness strategy.

### Bald on-record

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) stated that the bald on-record strategy is done in the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way possible.

(1) 00:25:48,813 → 00:26:02,251 (GA02.E04. BoR. MD)

**Context:** *Cristina and Izzie were discussing their patient, whom they suspected was faking her illness, also known as having Munchausen syndrome by Proxy.*

Cristina: No, she'd have to have Munchausen's.

Izzie: Wait. You think she's secretly ingesting something to produce real symptoms? Seriously?

Cristina: Yep. **Just run it by Burke. Tell me what he thinks.**

From the example above, Cristina is demonstrating the use of the bald on-record strategy. In the dialogue, Cristina is requesting Izzie to have the test on her patient to be run by Burke, and she is also asking Izzie to tell her about Burke's opinion of the test result. Cristina's request "Just run it" and "Tell me" are direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise.

### Positive Politeness

Table 2 below shows that the most frequent positive politeness strategy performed by the characters in the TV series *Grey's Anatomy* season 2 is the *be optimistic* strategy, with eight occurrences (32%). This indicates that the speaker wants to show the hearer that the speaker wants the best response from the hearer by making sure that both speaker and hearer share the same wants. The discussion about each strategy is shown in the following discussion.

Table 2. The frequency of positive politeness strategies found in TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* season 2

No	Positive Politeness Strategy	Token	%
1.	Noticing, attending to H (his interest, needs, wants, goods)	1	4
2.	Exaggerating (interest, approval, sympathy with h)	2	8
3.	Intensifying interest to H	1	4
4.	Using in-group identity markers	0	0
5.	Seek in agreement	0	0
6.	Avoiding disagreement	2	8
7.	Presupposing/raising/asserting common ground	1	4
8.	Joking	0	0
9.	Asserting or presupposing S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants	3	12
10.	Offering, promising	0	0
11.	Being optimistic	8	32
12.	Including both S and H in the activity	2	8
13.	Giving (or asking for) reasons	3	12
14.	Assuming or asserting reciprocity	2	8
15.	Giving gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

### Claiming common ground

This sub-strategy requires the speaker to claim common ground with the hearer, implying that both the speaker and the hearer belong to the same group and have similar desires.

#### **Strategy #1 Noticing, attending to H (interests, wants, needs, goods)**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 103), in the use of this strategy, the speaker should be aware of the hearer's condition.

(2) 00:35:45,176 → 00:35:52,247  
(GA02.E14.PP#1.MD)

**Context:** *Miranda Bailey was in her third trimester of pregnancy, and she needed to take a rest. Addison, as her ob-gyn, suggested that she should not go to work until the baby comes.*

Addison: **Bed rest at home until the baby comes.**

You do know what bed rest is, Miranda?

Bailey: Yeah. Hell

In the example above, Addison understands Bailey's condition. This can be seen from Addison's utterance, "bed rest at home until the baby comes", which indicates that she knows Bailey will keep working if she does not tell her to bed rest at home.

### **Strategy #2 Exaggerating**

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 104) explained that this strategy uses exaggerated intonation, stress, rhythm, and intensifying modifiers.

(3) 00:02:53,773 → 00:03:05,978  
(GA2.E3.PP#2.MH)

**Context:** *The interns (Alex, Izzie, and Meredith) were talking about how amazing Meredith's mother (Ellis Grey) was when she was a general surgeon before she suffered from Alzheimer.*

Alex: Grey, Izzie said you have tapes of your mom performing surgery. **I'd kill to see the Ellis Grey in action.**

Izzie: Maybe you can come over tonight and we can all watch it together. Right?

Meredith: Oh, yeah. If this were a hell dimension.

Alex's request by uttering "I'd kill to see..." indicates that Alex is overemphasizing when making a request to Meredith. This strategy is used by Alex to show his interest in their topic of discussion.

### **Strategy #3 Intensifying Interest to Hearer**

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 106) explained that another way to communicate the speaker's wants to the hearer is by intensifying interest in the hearer.

(4) 00:18:24,203 → 00:18:43,315  
(GA02.E15.PP#3.MD)

**Context:** *Cristina just got out of the OR from doing a rare surgery. She left the operating room because she thought that the resident doctor was incompetent and working with the wrong method that might cause death to the patient.*

Burke: I thought you were in surgery.

Cristina: I was. Necrotizing fasciitis.

Burke: No kidding? So why are you out here?

Cristina: Because the new resident, um, she's the new Bailey.....except that she's the exact opposite of Bailey in absurd, horrifying, profoundly disturbing ways. **I think the new resident is killing our patient.**

Cristina's utterance, "I think the new resident is killing our patient." is used to engage Burke's interest in the conversation by convincing him with a good story that might intensify Burke's interest in the event that is going on.

### **Strategy #6 Avoiding Disagreement**

This strategy is typically used when the speaker pretends to agree with the hearer or has a desire to disagree with the hearer, but he/she is trying to hide his/her disagreement.

(5) 00:10:09,175 → 00:10:21,779  
(GA02.E08.PP#6.LD)

**Context:** *Addison and Derek were arguing about the risky surgery that their close friend was about to do. Addison acted as a doctor towards their friend, while Derek, acted as a friend. This made them argue. Addison: She came to me for a medical consultation, Derek. I'm her doctor.*

Derek: Those are some of our closest friends. This is personal.

Addison: **Fine. If it's personal, then maybe we should deal with them as a couple. Acting like a couple.**

In the example above, Addison and Derek are arguing, and Addison is trying to avoid any more argumentation, so she is expressing a request to pretend that she agrees with what Derek says.

Addison's disagreement can be seen by the use of the word maybe, which is used to minimize the threat on Derek's face.

### ***Strategy #7 Presupposing/raising/asserting common ground***

Brown Levinson (1987, p. 119) stated that this strategy is used when the speaker and the hearer share the same knowledge with each other. This strategy is usually done in a relaxed situation by talking about unrelated topics, such as gossiping or making small talk.

(6) 00:12:27,179 → 00:12:33,076  
(GA02.E16.PP#7.MD)

**Context:** *Bailey's water just broke, and she was waiting in the delivery room, helped by Addison as her Ob-gyn. Meanwhile, the male doctors were waiting outside, peeping at what was going on in there.*

Addison: A gathering of men outside the delivery room. How mid-century of you.

Derek: **Say hi to Bailey for me.**

The conversation happened during off-work hours, and the utterance "say hi to Bailey for me". This sentence is unrelated to the topic of discussion, which indicates that both Addison and Derek know that this conversation is not serious and that they have common ground.

### **Conveying the Speaker and the Hearer are co-operators.**

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 125) stated that one way to convey cooperation is for the speaker and the hearer to share the same goal, which implies that both the speaker and the hearer are co-operators.

### ***Strategy #9 Asserting or presupposing speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants***

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 125), one way to indicate that the speaker and the hearer are co-operators is to assert and imply the speaker's knowledge of the hearer's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants into them.

(7) 00:01:49,309 → 00:02:02,720  
(GA02.E26.PP#9.SF)

**Context:** *There were new incoming trauma patients in the Emergency Room. A lot of doctors were needed to handle the situation. Cristina was trying to help one of the patients, but the chief gave her a chance to lead the whole room instead.*

Cristina: Chief! How bad is it? It looks bad. I'm here. I can help. If there's anything surgical, I can help.

Richard: **Why don't you go run Trauma 2, Dr. Yang?**

Cristina: I get to run Trauma 2 all by myself?

Richard: Yes, but find me if you need help. And get consults.

Richard is making a request to Cristina/Dr. Yang by asserting his knowledge and concern for Cristina's wants. Richard knows that Cristina has always wanted to run the Emergency Room since she is very ambitious. By doing this, Richard is trying to make her busy by asking her to run the trauma/emergency room because he knows that she would love to do what he requested.

### ***Strategy #11 Being optimistic***

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 126) explained that this strategy refers to the want of the speaker to show that both the speaker and hearer are cooperatively involved in the relative activity.

(8) 00:11:42,601 → 00:11:48,300 (GA02.E15.PP#11. HP)

**Context:** *Sydney was the new resident who replaced Bailey temporarily while she was on maternity leave. She was offering the interns to perform surgery on a patient.*

Sydney: Anyone want to probe the wound?

The interns: (in unison) I do.

Alex: **I'd really like to try your "healing with love" technique.**

Sydney: I like the way you think, Alex. You do the honors.

In the example above, Sydney and her interns are discussing a new method that she will

teach her interns, and Alex really wants to take the opportunity, so he is making a request by employing the be optimistic strategy to Sydney. It can be seen how Alex is making the request by saying, “I’d really like...” in his utterance.

### ***Strategy #12 Including both Speaker and Herer in the activity***

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 127), when the speaker uses the pronoun “we”, the speaker means “you” or “me.

(9) 00:05:10,610 → 00:05:18,842 (GA02.E13.PP#12. HP)

**Context:** *Richard, as the chief of surgery, gathered all of the surgeons in the hospital hall to announce that the nurses had to work extra hours due to the lack of nurses in the hospital.*

Richard: Our nurses are gonna have to work extra hours to compensate, **so we should treat them well.** Cranky nurses don’t do us any good.

Izzie: [whispers] Well, maybe you can cheer them up.

The example above shows that Richard requests all of the surgeons to treat the nurses well since they are working extra hours. Richard uses the word “we” in his utterance to include himself and all of the surgeons in the hospital in treating the nurses better. By using this strategy, Richard can redress the FTA.

### ***Strategy #13 Giving (or asking for) reasons***

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 128), giving reasons can demonstrate that the speaker includes the hearer in the activity and explains why the speaker wants what he/she wants.

(10) 00:05:06.306 → 00:05:12.434 (GA2.E16.PP#13.SF)

**Context:** *Burke and Derek were just having a casual conversation in the hospital corridor while checking the schedule board for that day’s surgeries.*

Burke: Dr. Shepherd.

Derek: Dr. Burke... You and I... We’ve known each other for quite some times. We’ve done several successful surgeries together. **Why can’t we call each other by first name?**

The strategy that is used by Derek (the speaker) by uttering “why can’t” is demanding the reason from Burke (the hearer) whether there are good reasons why Burke cannot cooperate in granting Derek’s request.

### ***Strategy #14 Assuming or asserting reciprocity***

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 129) claim that the speaker and the hearer are co-operators, which can be accomplished by providing evidence of reciprocal rights or making deals between the speaker and the hearer.

(11) 00:36:40,565 → 00:36:54,868 (GA02.E20.PP#14.LD)

**Context:** *Derek and Meredith had just finished their shifts, and they were in the elevator. They were talking about something non-work related.*

Meredith: There’s a line between friends and “not” friends. And if I tell you this... If I tell you this horrible thing, **you have to react as my friend, not my “not” friend.**

Derek: I can do that.

Meredith employs the assume or assert reciprocity strategy by saying, “you have to react as my friend...”. The utterance that she makes indicates that she expects reciprocity between her and Derek. She made an obligation for Derek to fulfil, which is reacting as her friend after she tells him the horrible thing that she did.

### ***Negative Politeness***

As shown in Table 3 below, the most frequently performed negative politeness strategy is be conventionally indirect. This strategy is the most frequently used by the characters of the TV series of Grey’s Anatomy season 2 because the speakers tend to have the desire to speak straight to the point without having to impose to the hearer.



Table 3. The frequency of negative politeness strategies of requests found in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* season 2

No	Negative Politeness Strategy	Token	%
1	Being conventionally indirect	71	65.74
2	Questioning, hedge	31	28.70
3	Being pessimistic	1	0.93
4	Minimizing the imposition	2	1.85
5	Givin deference	3	2.78
6	Apologizing	0	0.00
7	Impersonalizing S and H: avoiding the pronouns 'I' and	0	0.00
8	Stating the FTA as a general rule	0	0.00
9	Nominalizing	0	0.00
10	Going on record as incurring a debt, or as not in debt in H	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>108</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Being direct

This sub-strategy aims to minimize the imposition on the hearer by speaking directly to the point.

#### *Strategy #1 Being conventionally indirect*

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 132), in this strategy, the speaker is faced with his/her desire to convey his/her desires to the hearer, both on-record and off-record.

(12) 00:20:41,273 → 00:20:55,750 (GA02.E23.NP#1.PC)

*Context:* Addison and Alex were operating on a dying newborn baby. The situation was tense since they had different opinions on how they should operate the baby. However, since Addison was Alex's attending (senior doctor/specialized doctor), he had to follow her instructions.

Addison: Uh, there's a little bleeding near the tube here. **Can you hand me the bovie, Dr. Karev?**

Alex: I don't see any abnormal bleeding.

Addison is making a request to Alex by saying, "Can you hand me the bovie, Dr. Karev?". The request she made happened during surgery in the

operating room, in which the situation was tense, especially with the fact that she and Alex were arguing about the process of the surgery. However, instead of saying directly, "hand me the bovie", she is still trying to say it in the politest way possible and trying to save Alex's FTA so that he does not feel imposed on.

### Don't presume/assume

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 144) defined that this type of strategy is used to minimize the imposition of the hearer by not assuming or presuming the hearer's desire or belief.

#### *Strategy #2 Questioning, hedging*

This strategy employs non-committal statements that give the hearer the impression that he/she is not being forced to do anything.

(13) 00:11:25,284 → 00:11:46,327  
(GA02:E03.NP#2.HP)

*Context:* Meredith and Richard were talking about Meredith's mother, Richard's close friend, who was suffering from Alzheimer. She was hallucinating about the time when she was a resident.

Meredith: Sorry I didn't say sooner. I know you were close, but she made me promise. She seems to be reliving the heyday of her residency a lot these days. **And I just thought maybe if you could stop by and say hello, it would mean a lot to her.**

Richard: Oh, of course

The utterance "I just thought maybe if you could..." indicates that Meredith does not want to give the impression that Richard should grant her wish and to say yes to her request. With this strategy, Richard is not being forced to grant Meredith's wish to visit Meredith's mother.

### Don't coerce H

This sub-strategy is used by the speaker to redress the hearer's face. In redressing the hearer's negative-face desires, the speaker does not coerce the hearer's response.

### **Strategy #3 Being pessimistic**

The *be pessimistic* strategy is applied by the speaker when the speaker shows his/her doubt to the hearer by asking the hearer the possibility of whether the hearer can grant the speaker's wishes or not.

(14) 00:15:43,776 → 00:16:55,707  
(GA02.E14.NP#03.PC)

**Context:** *Richard was having problems with all of the nurses protesting against doctors who loaded them with tons of work, and yet their wages were very small.*

Richard: The nurses again? **Can't you do something?**  
You used to be one of them. Don't you speak "nurse?" Richard's assistant: That's why you don't get any respect from the nurses. Surgical arrogance.

Richard: [scoffs] I'm not arrogant.

Richard is using the *be pessimistic* strategy. This can be seen from the way he expresses his doubt about his assistant's capability to talk to the nurses.

### **Strategy #4 Minimizing the Imposition**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 176), the *minimizing the imposition* politeness strategy is intended to lessen the seriousness of the FTA towards the hearer.

(15) 00:21:32,724 → 00:21:42,996  
(GA02:E08.NP#4.SH)

**Context:** *Richard offered Bailey an opportunity to continue her residency program in the hospital, but she did not seem to be interested in Richard's offer.*

Richard: You'll get more surgical experience here.  
Write your own ticket. Why aren't you excited?

Bailey: No! I'm excited. I... **Excuse me, sir, I just need to scrub in.** Thanks.

Bailey was giving Richard strong hints that she does not want to continue this conversation by saying, "Excuse me, sir. I just need to scrub in." Bailey also uses negative politeness strategy of minimizing

the imposition in making the request. The use of the word "just" understates the seriousness of the imposition that can redress his FTA so that Richard does not feel offended by her.

### **Strategy #5 Giving deference**

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 178) stated that this strategy refers to paying the hearer a positive face. This strategy is used to make the hearer feel appreciated by the speaker by pointing out their power or by praising them.

(16) 00:15:28,327 → 00:15:36,263  
(GA02.E25.NP#05.HP)

**Context:** *Meredith just finished all five trauma patients under Callie's order, and she asked whether she could scrub in for the ORIF (bone surgery) with Callie or not.*

Meredith: I've finished all five of your patients. Do you mind if I scrub in? I've never seen an ORIF before.

Callie: Can't. The board's all backed up like crazy.

The utterance "Do you mind" indicates that Meredith is trying to make Callie feel good and to emphasize that Callie has a higher status than the speaker, Meredith. This strategy is used to make the hearer continue to perform an act requested by the speaker without feeling forced.

### **Off-Record**

Table 4 below shows that there are only nine requests that are uttered using the off-record strategies by the characters of *Grey's Anatomy* season 2, which makes this politeness strategy the least used in the TV series.

### **Strategy #1 Giving Hints**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 213), if the speaker says something that is not explicitly relevant, it means that the speaker wishes to leave the interpretation to the hearer, so it is up to the hearer to interpret the meaning of hints that the speaker provides to the hearer.

Table 4. The frequency of off-record politeness strategies of requests found in TV Series Grey's Anatomy season 2

No	Off-Record Politeness Strategy	Token	%
1	Givin hints	3	33.33
2	Givin association clues	6	66.67
3	Presupposing		0.00
4	Understating		0.00
5	Overstating		0.00
6	Using tautologies		0.00
7	Using contradictious		0.00
8	Being ironic		0.00
9	Using metaphors		0.00
10	Using rhetorical questions		0.00
11	Being ambiguous		0.00
12	Being vague		0.00
13	Over-generalizing		0.00
14	Displacing H		0.00
15	Being incomplete, use ellipsis		0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(17) 00:28:29,407 → 00:28:46,188 (GA02.E08. OR#1.SH)

**Context:** Bailey asked Meredith to tell their patient that her cancer was growing and that she was dying, but Meredith had not told her yet because the patient's husband preferred that it would be better for his wife not to know about it. Meredith: Mr. Sorrento doesn't want me to tell his wife that she's dying.

Bailey: You haven't told her yet?

Meredith: No.

Bailey: OK, I didn't hear you say that. You're her doctor. It's your responsibility to give patients the information necessary to make an informed decision. **Now, I'm hungry. I'm tired, and you're in my way.**

Bailey's request is made when she is giving Meredith hints that are not explicitly relevant to the topic of discussion. Bailey's utterance, "Now, I'm hungry. I'm tired, and you're in my way", indicates that she is indirectly asking her to let her go home and that Meredith needs to take care of her patient, and also indirectly asking her to get out of her way so that Bailey can go home.

### Strategy #2 Giving association clues

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 215), in employing this strategy, the speaker and the hearer must have at least mutual knowledge based on their internal experience.

(18) 00:12:54,774 → 00:13:02,910  
(GA02.E21.OR#2.SH)

**Context:** Cristina asked Burke why he needed his personalized scrub cap so much when he could just wear the scrub cap provided by the hospital.

Burke: I just prefer to operate wearing my own. It's a comfort thing.

Cristina: Huh, well... **I prefer having George out of our apartment.**

In the example above, when Burke is telling her how important his personalized scrub is, Cristina changes the topic of discussion. She is indirectly making a request to Burke by saying "I prefer having George out of our apartment". This utterance indicates that she wants George out of their apartment.

Cristina expressed her feeling about how she actually felt about having George in their apartment in response to Burke's statement about his preference of his scrub cap. She thinks that it is the perfect moment to say that she prefers having George out of their apartment since they were talking about preference.

### Power and Social Distance

Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 76) explained that power is when the speaker has a higher social standing in relation to the hearer, the less likely it is that she or he will need to employ strategies to minimize the possibility of FTA.

Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 83) stated that social distance is also defined as the consideration of the interlocutors' relationship to one another in a particular situation, in addition to the degree to which they are familiar with one another, which is the degree of intimacy between the speaker and the hearer. Below is the table that shows the job positions for each character of *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2.

Table 5. The job position of each character in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* season 2

No	Characters	Job Positions
1	Meredith Grey	Intern
2	Cristina Yang	Intern
3	Alex Karev	Intern
4	Izzie Stevens	Intern
5	George O'Malley	Intern
6	Miranda Bailey	Resident
7	Derek Shepherd	Attending surgeon
8	Addison Shepherd	Attending surgeon
9	Preston Burke	Attending surgeon
10	Richard Webber	Attending surgeon

The table above shows the job positions of each character in the TV Series. This table is used to show the differences in their positions in relation to the impact of the social variables, which are power and social distance.

Based on the power and distance representation according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, five different categories are established as shown in the table below.

Table 6. Power and social distance in the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* season 2

No	Power and Social Distance	No. of utterances	%
1.	Equal power and absence of social distance (=P and -D)	49	17.88
2.	Equal power and absence of social distance (=P and -D)	12	4.38
3.	Absence of power and presence of social distance (-P and +D)	27	9.85
4.	Absence of power and social distance (-P and -D)	28	10.22
5.	Presence of power and social distance (+P +D)	158	57.66
<b>Total</b>		<b>274</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As can be seen from the table above, the most commonly used power and social variable is the presence of power and social distance (+P, +D). From this result, it is shown that the characters who have higher power with the presence of social distance tend to speak with their interlocutors who have lower power than them.

The politeness strategy that is employed the most by the characters in this category is the bald on-record strategy. This strategy is employed because it shows the directness and to show the power that the speakers have towards the hearer because the utterances that are employed by them are mostly imperative utterances.

## CONCLUSION

This research investigates the use of the politeness strategies of requests and analyzes power and distance in the use of politeness strategies in performing the speech act of requests that are employed by the characters of the TV Series *Grey's Anatomy* Season 2. The requests utterances were classified and analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies and power and social distance.

Some previous research in politeness strategies have been conducted before. This research also analyzing on the social variable of politeness. In this case, how politeness strategies affect surgeons in making request to their colleagues who have different power and social distance between interlocutors.

Four politeness strategies are performed in the TV series. The most commonly used politeness strategy was the bald on-record strategy. This strategy was used to show directness and the urgency of the situation. The characters' directness is not impolite because it is used to show swift, clear, and straightforward action.

Meanwhile, the least performed politeness strategy is the off-record strategy. This strategy is indirect, and the characters in the TV series are surgeons who are faced with emergency situations every day, so they tend to avoid indirect utterances to achieve fast and clear action and to avoid misinterpretation.

Meanwhile, as for the social variables of power and social distance, the result showed that power and social distance have considerable impacts on how the characters of the TV series make requests to others. Therefore, these findings demonstrate the impact of the characters' power and social distance in

understanding their interlocutors' differences in power and social distance status in order to make requests.

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